



Arrow Regional Arts Council (ARAC) FY 24-25 Biennial Plan

Mission Statement

The Arrowhead Regional Arts Council (ARAC) mission is to facilitate and encourage local arts development. This mission statement grows from a conviction that the arts improve the quality of life in the region.

Vision

- The arts are integrated into the social, political, economic fabric, and identity of every community in the region. (Cultural Integration)
- Artists, arts organizations, and arts activities thrive and contribute to the regional economy. (Sustainability)
- Community members and audiences are arts literate. (Education)
- The Council utilizes an innovative rural arts model that ensures the arts are accessible throughout the whole region. (Leadership/Access)

Core Values

- Will provide financial support, information, and encouragement to the arts community.
- Will value its responsibility to provide leadership to individuals, arts organizations, and communities.
- Will communicate clearly and respectfully.
- Will develop innovative programs and services to meet the needs of its expanding arts community.
- Will advocate for the essential role of the arts in daily life.

Region (2997/3,000 characters)

The region we serve makes up the northeast corner of Minnesota and includes Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis counties, as well as Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Bois Forte, and Leech Lake Nations. The area is larger than 18,000 square miles, making it larger than nine states. The population is just over 324,000. The main cities in the area include Duluth, Grand Marais, Ely, International Falls, Virginia, Hibbing, Grand Rapids, Cloquet, and Moose Lake. We are the largest regional arts council in the state by land area.

Although fourth (4th) in population size among the state's eleven regions, Arrowhead is second (2nd) in overall attendance and third in youth attendance. It ranks second (2nd) in total economic impact, economic impact per capita, and total government revenue generated by the arts sector. It is also fourth (4th) in the number of artists and creative workers.

Creative Minnesota 2019 found that there are over 4,383 artists and creative workers in Arrowhead Minnesota. Creative workers are defined as people who make their living wholly, or in part, by working for for-profits, non-profits, or self-employed, in 40 creative occupations.

- This is a growth of 284 creative workers since the 2017 study.

The study found that the combined economic impact of nonprofit arts organizations, their audiences and artists and creative workers in Arrowhead Minnesota is over \$93 million annually.

- This includes \$34.5 million spent by nonprofit arts organizations, \$37 million spent by 1.5 million attendees, and the direct spending of artists in their communities, on things such as art supplies and studio rental, of \$21.5 million.
- This is a growth of \$9.7 million in economic impact since a previous 2017 Creative Minnesota study, and \$40.4 million in economic impact from arts organizations and their audiences since the passage of the Legacy Amendment in 2008.

Minnesotans strongly believe that arts and culture are important to their quality of life, and Minnesotans attend and participate in the arts more than other Americans:

- 74% of Minnesotans, compared to 54% of all Americans, attend arts and culture events in the past year.
- 55% of Minnesotans are personally involved in creative activity in their everyday life.
- 81% of Americans believe that the arts are a “positive experience in a troubled world.”
- 90% of Americans believe that cultural facilities (theaters, museums, sculpture parks, neighborhood arts centers) improve quality of life.

According to Minnesota Compass, the ethnic distribution is predominantly White/Caucasian with 91.1% of the total population identifying as such. This is followed by American Indian/Alaska Native (2.8%), Two or more races (2.1%), Hispanic/Latino (1.7%), and Black/African American (1.3%). Foreign-born residents make up 2.2% of the population.

The household median income of the Arrowhead Region area is \$53,600, which equates to the median income being \$14,900 below the Minnesota median annual income. The median income of the Arrowhead region has decreased the gap compared to the last reported income numbers.

In FY 22-23 (so far), ARAC has received 645 applications requesting a total of \$2,548,683.99 and awarded 319 applicants totaling \$1,222,842.02. Of the total applications funded there were sixty-five (65) organizations and 150 individual artists. The organizations received \$660,873 and the individuals received \$380,663 from the state’s general and Legacy funds.

ARAC relies on a group of community members and one board member (for each grant program) from the Arrowhead Region to serve as panel members that review grant applications and make funding recommendations to the Board of Directors. In FY 22, 44 reviewers contributed their time to serve as panelists.

Needs Assessment (3576/10,000 characters)

ARAC’s last needs assessment was during the 2022-2023 year. ARAC completed a Needs Assessment to help complete this Biennial Plan.

We combined three elements into the Needs Assessment:

1. A review of outreach to the arts community and the arts-involved public that relates to the needs in the region. Between July 2022 and February 2023, ARAC’s Director of

Grants and Outreach conducted public outreach in seventeen (17) communities reaching 276 artists/arts organizations. The outreach helps the ARAC staff to understand the needs of the region. But also helps to get our programming out to the communities that may not have heard of ARAC before.

- Personal meetings and site visits of all 19 organizations that applied for Operating Support discussing their pandemic experience, concerns, and plans moving forward: Itasca Orchestra and Strings, Grand Rapids; Northern Film Alliance, Duluth; Armory Arts and Music Center, Duluth; Cook County Historical Society, Grand Marais; Duluth Fiber Guild, Duluth; Edge Center for the Arts, Bigfork; Ely Folk School, Ely; Ely Winter Festival, Ely; Ely's Historic Theater, Ely; Friends of Finland, Finland; Grand Marais Playhouse, Grand Marais; Lyric Center for the Arts, Virginia; Matinee Musicale, Virginia; Mesabi Community Orchestra, Grand Rapids; North Shore Music Association, Duluth; Northern Expressions Arts Collective, Duluth; Oldenburg Arts and Cultural Community, Carlton; Story Art & Museum, Grand Rapids, and Tofte Lake Center, Ely. During outreach the following events were attended:
- Catalyst Content Festival, Duluth; Rainy Lake Strings and Orchestra, International Falls; NAACP, Duluth; Men as Peacemakers, Duluth, AICHO (American Indian Community Housing Organization, Duluth; County Seat Theater, Cloquet; WDSE Public Television, Duluth; Duluth Superior Film Festival, Duluth.
- In supplement, ARAC Outreach Staff had the following community outreach:
 - Participated in the Chalk A Lot event in Two Harbors and connected with ten (10) artists.
 - Volunteered at the Art Colony Art Festival in Grand Marais connecting with 30 artists.
 - Attended the George Morrison Postage Stamp award ceremony in Grand Portage connecting with 22 artists and culture bearers.
 - Attended the 20/20 Art Tour in the Two Harbors area where we connected with 15 artists.
 - Attended Art Along the Shore stretching from Duluth to Grand Portage with 25 artist studio visits while dropping literature and flyers along the way; and
 - Met with the Executive Director of Bois Forte Heritage Center to form a working partnership to expand our outreach and to promote our services in Native communities.
- Further forms of outreach currently completed by staff are bi-weekly newsletter, a robust social media presence offering not only our grant opportunities but other opportunities for artists and arts organizations. Each year we do a mailing of posters and flyers to each of the 29 public libraries in the Arrowhead Region with an ask to be considered in their scheduling as well as the availability of a space to present workshops.
 - Notes from the community outreach meetings were reviewed in January to March 2023 as part of the Needs Assessment.
 - The Executive Director held 20 individual meetings with 17 organizations and individuals and asked everyone was asked the same question, “As we start rethinking our programming and services we offer in addition to grants. What do artists and organizations want or need from ARAC? Or what would you like us to offer if we could?” about current and future programming.

2. Special public meeting was held on Zoom to organizations and individuals representing differing geographic and artistic communities. We held special public meeting to discuss the needs assessment with a broad variety of community members interested in the arts, but not necessarily applicants or previous grantees. We have begun a virtual workshop Wednesday series with 13 being held thus far, we have engaged with over 53 artists/arts organizations. We have also recorded many workshops and have them available in our resources so they can be accessed at any time. In person workshops have been in Aitkin, Two Harbors, Grand Marais, Ely, Virginia, and Duluth engaging over 82 individuals.
3. An online survey was created with two separate surveys for individuals and organizations. A total of 58 responses were received that comprised 17 organizations and 41 individuals. We sent to the arts community and the arts involved public that we can reach. The survey was available from January 1, 2023-February 28, 2023.

The most important results of the Needs Assessment along with the statistics used, helped formulate decisions which current programming was useful and helped to realize the needs of the Arrowhead Region and where we need to offer more resources:

- Like many nonprofit and volunteer organizations around the county, our applicants are dealing with burnout of both staff and volunteers and continue to face funding challenges.
- Regional arts organizations would like more opportunities to meet and work with their peers. Additionally, there is a desire for more workshops related to both grants and arts practice related activities.
- Generally, organizations are satisfied with the ease of finding information about grant programs; clarity of grant guidelines and eligibility; deadline dates; clarity of grant award dollar amounts; staff assistance before applying; ease of online application form; transparency of application process; communication about grants awarded: communication about contract, requirements and/or project changes, ease of filling out online grant contract, and ease of filling out online final report form.
- Our organizational applicants apply to a variety of current ARAC programs, but operating support is the most useful to organizations.
- Artists continue to want opportunities for training and learning as well as networking opportunities. Most individual answers related to the need for increased opportunities to grow audiences, show work, and build specific skill sets.
- Our website and social media have been utilized by artists which shows the strength of our outreach efforts. The participation in workshops is a good indicator that artists are welcoming the addition to our non-grants programming.
- There is a demand to fund arts learning opportunities for interested residents of all ages.
- Support for travel to opportunities (educational and presentations) outside of the region, both within the state and outside of the state.
- A reassessment of the individual artist project grants indicates the need for an adjustment because of the increased cost of living.
- The Needs Assessment indicated the need to ease the process of applying for a grant, wording choices, and repetitive questions.

Description of the Planning Process (1399/3000 characters)

ARAC's board has a Review Planning Process Committee that reviewed the questionnaires and made recommendations. The Committee also reviewed the timeline and the creation of the biennial plan. The Review Planning Process Committee meets monthly discussing issues of concern related to the ARAC's programs and services. For this Biennial Plan, the committee set an agenda during its summer meetings and then worked through issues over the course of the fall. In addition, the staff has had meetings both internally and externally about what kinds of services that are working, what should be added, and what has lived out their useful life. In addition, several sessions of the full board have been devoted to issues relating to the Biennial Plan along with time to review the Needs Assessment.

Needs Assessment and Biennial Plan Calendar

Draft 11/21/22.

Late January

- Needs Assessment information gathered and compiled for Review Process Planning Committee Changes/New grant programs proposed for inclusion into Biennial Plan.

Early Mid-February.

- Outline of Biennial Plan completed.

End of February.

- Biennial Plan Draft completed to and sent to Review Process Planning Committee

Early March

- Review Process Planning Committee meeting on draft Biennial Plan

Thursday, March 16, 2023

- Draft Biennial Plan reviewed at Board Meeting

First Week of April (Becca and Holly will determine date)

- Public hearing on our draft Biennial Plan.

Thursday, April 21, 2023

- Board Meeting. Full board approval of Biennial Plan, though if they have amendments, we could incorporate them into final.

Wednesday, May 15, 2023

- Final Biennial Plan due to MSAB.

Priorities (Proposed measurable outcomes/what change will result here, which 25-year goal will be addressed. Techniques to measure)

Priority 1: Our priority for the biennial plan is to strengthen, grow, diversify, and develop our Board of Directors and restructure our organization staffing to better serve our region's constituents.

We have started by creating a new job description for board members:

“The Arrowhead Regional Arts Council (ARAC) is seeking new board members for the next fiscal year (FY24, starting on July 1, 2023). The ARAC Board of Directors is the governing body of the organization primarily ensuring financial health and providing strategic direction. The ARAC Board works in partnership with the ARAC staff to ensure that the organization’s culture, practices, and relationships align with the values, mission, and vision we set forth.

Specifically, we are looking for board members that reside in Aitkin County, Itasca County, Koochiching County, Lake County, as well as members from the Fond du Lac, Bois Forte, and Leech Lake Nations. New Board members ideal expertise should include: finance, legal, human resources, and experience working in the public sector.

Individuals who are of African American, African, Afro-Latinx, Afro-Caribbean, Latinx, Chicana, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American/Native Alaskan, and SWANA (Southwest Asian and North African) descent, with Disabilities, and/or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual/Agender, Two-Spirit (LGBTQIA2+) are encouraged to apply.

Board Responsibilities

The ARAC Board is responsible for setting and overseeing policy and broad direction of the organization. The staff is responsible for taking policy and board direction and putting it into action. The board does not get involved in program planning or management of the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Board members are elected for a three-year term and may be elected to a second term for a total of six (6) years of service. We seek a balance of representation on the board geographic, artistic discipline, constituent/non-constituent, age, racial/cultural background, gender, and organizational experience.

Each board member adds value to the organization by bringing their experiences as a resident of the region, a member of their community, an artist in their discipline, and many other circumstances that influence their whole being. The role of the board member is to bring those experiences to inform decisions made about the entire Arrowhead Region.

The ARAC Board has six (6) meetings per fiscal year which includes four (4) quarterly business meetings, an orientation in July, and a board planning retreat. Business meetings and orientation are scheduled on the third Thursday of the month from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Meeting months are July (orientation), September, December, March, & June. All business meetings take place over Zoom and are conducted in the spirit of the Open Meeting Law.

Prior to each board meeting, board members receive important materials related to decisions and discussions for the meeting which includes financials, staff reports, funding recommendations, and any other information that needs the Board’s approval or discussion.

ARAC uses a committee system to do more in depth and additional work outside of the monthly board meetings. Current active committees include: Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Review Process, and Planning Committee, Nominating Committee, and the Appeals Committee. Each committee is comprised of board and staff members.

Board members may be called upon by staff for counsel and particular expertise. Staff also relies on board members to make referrals of future panelists from their community and colleagues.

ARAC Board members are expected to be advocates of the arts and to understand the importance of the legislative process to ARAC's funding. Including the relationships with the Forum of Regional Arts Councils of MN, the MN State Arts Board, and MN Citizens for the Arts.

ARAC Board members may be reimbursed for parking, mileage, or lodging related to attendance to meetings and events where they are officially representing ARAC. Requests for reimbursement shall be made using ARAC's Board Expense Reimbursement Form.

It is important when members share information and insight about arts activities in their county and/or community. Board members are required to attend ARAC funded events in their area, when able, and can have their purchased event tickets reimbursed.

Board members are also given a monetary stipend for attending official meetings.

We created a new form that will be used for all new board member application processes. We are in the process of revising the onboarding process for board members. We plan to move to community panels and no longer require board members to participate on all panels, but they will be given the opportunity to participate as they choose.

We are in the process of restructuring employee job duties and responsibilities, and encompassing new job descriptions along with a revised employee onboarding process.

Statewide Goals Addressed:

1. People of all ages, ethnicities, and abilities participate in the arts.
2. The arts are woven into every facet of community life.
3. Minnesotans believe that the arts are vital to who we are.
4. People trust Minnesota's stewardship of public arts funding.
5. The arts thrive in Minnesota.

Objectives for Priority 1:

- ARAC will have board members that represent the demographic and geographic diversity in the region-including representatives from each tribal nation in our region.
- ARAC board members will feel supported and be confident in their ability to govern the organization.
- ARAC board members will be engaged as partners and advocates for the organization and the arts.
- ARAC will have the appropriate staff capacity to manage the programs, provide quality services and attention to constituents.
- ARAC staff will feel informed and supported to grow their capacity to provide knowledgeable and quality services to the region.

Measurable Outcomes:

ARAC will have the appropriate staff and board capacity to perform organizational duties to advance ARAC's mission, vision, and core values.

Plan for measuring outcomes:

- The ARAC staff meets weekly for collective check-ins and programmatic discussions. Additionally, staff will create a yearly work plan for their main work focuses and will have quarterly check-ins to see if they need assistance or resources to complete and exceed their work plans.
- The ARAC Board of Directors will have a yearly staff retreat to work on topics that need further training such as governance. The retreat topics will be based on the needs of the entire Board and staff.

Priority 2

Our second (2) priority seeks to increase outreach and networking within the Arrowhead Region.

Statewide Goals Addressed:

1. People of all ages, ethnicities, and abilities participate in the arts.
2. The arts are woven into every facet of community life.
3. Minnesotans believe that the arts are vital to who we are.
4. People trust Minnesota's stewardship of public arts funding.
5. The arts thrive in Minnesota.

Objectives

Increase access to ARAC grants and processes by increasing outreach into the region, because of the vast Arrowhead Region area. Increasing outreach by staff in the region, we can extend our reach and have better access to people that may have personal barriers such as but not limited to access to technology, and/or transportation.

- Gain feedback from the Arrowhead Region community on what ARAC can do to better serve the region.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Regional artists and organizations find opportunities and support from ARAC to connect in person and virtually to share best practices and networking on common themes.
- ARAC staff is more geographically accessible to potential applicants through community gatherings, local meeting opportunities, and virtual accessibility.

Plan for Measuring Outcomes:

- Attendees at workshops and community gatherings will be documented and participants will be asked for feedback on the relevancy of the information provided to them.
- Online Feedback forms for individual meetings will be used to remove accessibility issues and workshops will be used to further develop needs assessment and planning.
- The feedback ARAC's collects during community engagement will be used to measure against previous years to ensure which method of outreach is a best practice.
- We will split grant officer duties to allow for one employee to be outreach and develop community relationships and trust and another employee will develop and improve the overall granting process. That person will also use statistics to collect data in order to drive enhanced decision-making based on the community's voice.

Priority 3

Our third priority will seek to expand Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in all facets of the ARAC organization.

Statewide Goals Addressed:

1. People of all ages, ethnicities, and abilities participate in the arts.
2. The arts are woven into every facet of community life.
3. Minnesotans believe that the arts are vital to who we are.
4. People trust Minnesota's stewardship of public arts funding.
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Objectives

- Maintain a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) budget that will encompass lunch and learn events based on our overall Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Board and employee's needs.
- DEI seeks to expand and enhance the Board and employees understanding of others.
 - Attract, recruit, and maintain diverse talent for both the Board and organization.
 - Help eliminate personal biases in all facets of the organization.
 - Create an inclusive environment.
- Continue the practice of paying stipends to grant reviewers for ARAC grant panels.
- Continue to engage staff and board members in the IDI process, discussions, and reflection about equity.
- Work on ARAC internal documents to make sure wording is inclusive of the whole community.

Measurable Outcomes

- As a result of targeted outreach, compensation for grant panel review work, and other inclusive practices, the diverse makeup of ARAC board, panels, committees, and applicant pool will continue branching out to reflect the demographics of the region.
- Individuals and organizations in Arrowhead Region from historically underrepresented demographics and geographic areas will continue to see an increase in access to ARAC resources and opportunities.
- Regional artists and organizations and engaged community members see an increased awareness and support around issues of race and equity as it relates to their work.

Plan for Measuring Outcomes:

- Arrowhead Regional area artists will see an increase in understanding and support from ARAC organization.
- DEI budgeting and spending will be given in monthly statements to the ARAC board.
- Annual review of demographics for ARAC applicants (funded and not), grant panel members, and board members will continue to be collected, which will enable ARAC to track annual progress on DEI work during the biennium.
- Staff and Board members will have work plans from their IDI and will be an intricate part of training and development of both.

Program Information

Grant Programs and Services

Eligibility

For individual grants, applicants must be at least eighteen years old, a U.S. citizen or have permanent resident status, and a resident of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, or St. Louis County for at least six months and remain a Minnesota resident for the duration of the project. Individuals enrolled in arts-related degree programs are ineligible to apply. Past grant recipients with overdue, unaccepted, or falsified final reports are also ineligible.

For organizational grants, applicants can be State registered and federally recognized non-profit, tax-exempt organizations, accredited schools, tribal governments, or units of government. To be eligible, the organization must be in the following Arrowhead counties: Aitkin, Cook, Carlton, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, or St. Louis. If the group has not yet received non-profit, tax-exempt status, you may apply by using another nonprofit organization, accredited school, tribal government, or other unit of government as a fiscal sponsor. For our operating support program, the organization must be primarily an arts organization, which we define as the arts being at least 75% of an organization's budget.

In response to the survey responses and based on reviews of past statistics of grant applications and recipients the following list of proposed grant programs have been submitted to the Policy Review Committee and the full Board.

Grant Programs & Services for FY24-25 Biennium

ARAC will offer eleven (11) different grants based on our Needs Assessment and feedback from the region. All eleven (11) grants will follow the same state goals, priorities, objectives, measurable outcomes, and the plan for measuring outcomes.

State Goals

In order to realize our legacy vision, the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Minnesota's Regional Arts Councils must work together to accomplish the following goals:

Overarching Goal, the arts are essential for a vibrant society.

Goal, the arts are interwoven into every facet of community life.

Goal, Minnesotans believe the arts are vital to who we are.

Goal, people of all ages, ethnicities, and abilities participate in the arts.

Goal, people trust Minnesota's stewardship of public arts funding.

Goal, the arts thrive in Minnesota.

The following section provides detail including which state goal each priority aligns with, the objectives, and indicators for how we will measure progress for our eleven (11) grants.

Statewide Goals:

1. People of all ages, ethnicities and abilities participate in the arts.
2. The arts are interwoven into every facet of community life.
3. Minnesotans believe that the arts are vital to who we are.
4. People trust Minnesota's stewardship of public arts funding.
5. The arts thrive in Minnesota.

ARAC Grant Program Priority 1: Support organizations and artists to be responsive to their artistic goals and community needs. Aligns with statewide goals 1-5.

Objective 1a: Provide grant programs that are responsive to Arrowhead Region and compliant with statewide goals and rules.

Measurable Outcome:

- ARAC has clear guidelines that describe the grant process, criteria, and eligibility requirements to the public.
- ARAC guidelines comply with the Minnesota State Arts Board fiscal sponsorship agreement.
- ARAC has open communication and staff are available for public engagement.

Plan for Measuring Outcome:

- ARAC will use feedback forms to ensure that grantees understand the grant process.
- ARAC will ensure grant closeouts have state goals highlighted.
- ARAC will create a statement that covers the fiscal sponsorship agreement.
- ARAC will have high public engagement and outreach.

ARAC grant panels will utilize a set of secondary criteria applied after the review panel to increase the equity within a grant pool. The grant panels do this to ensure grants are awarded to BIPOC artists, disabled artists, and artists in underserved geographic areas of their region.

Artist Access (16 grants at \$1,000 each per year): for first-time grant recipients. Criteria include impact on the artist's career, artistic quality, and ability. Offered twice a year. (Legacy Access Funds)

Individual Artist Project (24 grants at \$4,000 each per year): provides up to \$4,000 for artists to execute a project. The criteria for this grant are artistic quality, impact, on the artist, and the ability to execute the proposed project. Offered twice a year. (Legacy Access Funds)

***NEW* Artist Equity Grant (12 grants at \$4,000 each per year):** This is a proposal for our McKnight funding. The artist equity grant for individuals would focus on "support for artistic projects in Minnesota led by individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC); and/or a disabled person/person with disabilities; and/or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual/Agender, Two-Spirit (LGBTQIA2+)." Propose to offer once a year. (McKnight Funds)

Educational Opportunity (budget of \$2,500 with grants up to \$750 each per year): For mentoring and learning activities within the state of Minnesota.
(Legacy Arts Learning Funds)

Professional Development (budget of \$5,000 with grants up to \$750 each per year): For skills learning and professional development related to expand or enhance artist practice, such as but not limited to DEI work, business, or marketing skills development. Can occur outside of the state.
(McKnight Funds)

Emergency Needs and Assistance (budget of \$5,000 with grants up to \$750 each per year): For artists to purchase and replace necessary equipment and tools that have been stolen or damaged unexpectedly. Organizations can use these funds to replace vital equipment that has simply worn out. (Legacy Access Funds)

Arts Learning (14 grants at \$5,000 each per year): Available to both individuals and organizations. Criteria includes educational value, impact, and ability. Offered twice a year.
(Legacy Arts Education Funds)

Arts and Cultural Heritage (5 grants of \$4,000 each per year): Available to both individuals and organizations for arts activities that encompass community cultural significance and authenticity to the community. Offered once a year.
(Legacy Arts and Cultural Heritage Funds)

Operating Support (Budget of \$100,000 per year with varying grants up to \$8,000 each): Primarily for arts organizations in the region. Criteria is artistic excellence and leadership, management and fiscal responsibility, assessment and evaluation, and community accessibility. Most recently we changed from a two-year Operating Support Grant to a renewal grant program due to the state not wanting multi-year grants. Award amounts will match them up with budget size and the awards will be \$4,000-\$6,000-\$8,000. Offered once a year.
(Legacy Access funding)

Art Project (16 grants of \$5,000 per year): This project grant is for organizations. Criteria is artistic vision, impact, and ability. Offered twice a year.
(Legacy Access funding)

Rural and Community Art Project (16 grants of \$5,000 per year): This program is for organizations outside of Duluth with arts budgets less than \$40,00 per year. Criteria is artistic vision, impact, and ability. Offered twice a year.
(Legacy Access funding)

Grant Program Notes:

Overall, ARAC organization does not recommend dramatic changes to our programming other than the inclusion of a new equity focused grant for individuals using McKnight funding. Consistency is good for applicants, and we feel our programs are fulfilling the needs stated by our artists and organizations while fulfilling the state funding requirements and priorities.

Grant Making and Monitoring Process

ARAC grant programs are announced by the organization to the public at the beginning of the grant application period. We use the Foundant grants system for applications and monitoring. Each program application is open for six weeks before deadline dates. Application questions are available for all programs at the beginning of the fiscal year. After the deadline, applications are reviewed by staff for completeness and eligibility.

All grants will be reviewed by community members. We work hard to make sure panels are representative of the diverse region we serve. Staff and panel members must adhere to strict conflict of interest rules based on the state's definition of conflict of interest. Each panel member is given access to the grant applications two weeks in advance of panel meetings. Only panel members present at the panel meetings are allowed to score the grants. Staff make no recommendations for any grant programs except for the three small grants which are presented and recommended to the board by staff for approval. In addition, we plan to adapt rules based on the Office of Grants Management policies about post scoring recommendations, especially reviewing grant selections for appropriate diversity. After review, the full ARAC Board votes to accept or reject the recommendations of the panels.

After board approval, applicants are notified by the staff of the board's decision. Successful applicants then must fill out an online grant agreement, after which grant checks are written.

Our monitoring process involves requiring that all grant recipients notify us in advance of changes to how they are using the grant funds. Occasionally, significant changes are brought to ARAC's Executive Committee or full board for review. Staff and board also regularly attend grant-funded events. Organizations receiving operating support have a required site visit every two years. We also monitor publicity for funded events to make sure state requirements related to Legacy funds are followed. All grantees must also write final reports documenting their projects and how the money was spent. Staff then reviews the final reports and works with grantees to clear up any questions.

Staff follows a strict procedure to ensure that there is fairness and equity in administering grants in the region.

Non-Grant Programs and Services:

ARAC will be active in the region and promote the organization and the Legacy Act and seek to build relationships with the community to develop strong partnerships. ARAC will monitor the effectiveness of current outreach and then possibly expand services and when ARAC better understands the needs and usefulness of the current outreach activities.

ARAC will follow its current media marketing plan which includes:

- ARAC will be active on social media.
- ARAC will continue to be a part of local publications.

- ARAC will continue bi-weekly newsletter.
- ARAC will continue Workshop Wednesday.
- ARAC will continue Library Programming.
- ARAC will continue canvassing posters and pamphlets with schedule of grant opportunities.
- ARAC Board and Staff will continue to attend and support ARAC funded events in the region along with the promotion of those events.
- ARAC will continue relationship building with artists, organizations, and communities.

Public Meeting

We held our public meeting on April 31, 2023, via Zoom at 11am. We advertised the meeting on social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), as well as via our email newsletter and our webpage. A draft of the ARAC Biennial Plan will be available on our website and at the ARAC office in advance of the meeting.