



Rural Arts Opportunity Grants FY2026 Program Guidelines

Application Deadline: 60 days before the project begins.

To ensure all Oklahomans have access to the arts, Rural Arts Opportunity Grants are available to organizations in select rural counties. The grant program represents a strategic investment by the Oklahoma Arts Council to advance state goals related to economic development, education, and quality of life. Grants are available to support capacity building and professional development activities, and learning-based or audience-based arts programs. This is a program developed through allocated funds from the Oklahoma State Legislature to leverage resources for geographically isolated areas of our state that have limited access to arts and cultural activities.

Program Goals

- Support arts programming and opportunities for more Oklahomans
 - This grant opportunity is only open for organizations in the Rural Opportunity Counties listed below
- Establish arts infrastructure in rural and remote areas

Rural Opportunity Counties

Organizations in the counties below are eligible for this funding opportunity. Counties were identified through an analysis of Oklahoma Arts Council funding history and award distribution, with a special focus on supporting historically underfunded areas.

Alfalfa	Dewey	Latimer	Okmulgee
Atoka	Ellis	Love	Osage
Beaver	Garvin	Major	Pawnee
Blaine	Grant	Marshall	Pittsburg
Caddo	Harmon	Mayes	Pushmataha
Choctaw	Harper	McClain	Roger Mills
Cimarron	Haskell	Murray	Sequoyah
Coal	Jefferson	Noble	Wagoner
Craig	Johnston	Nowata	Washita

Overview

Project Activity Dates: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 (Grant Period FY2026)

Grant Amount: Up to \$5,000 per organization.

Award match requirement: 1:1 (100%). Half of the match (50%) may be in-kind support. Matching funds may not be other Oklahoma Arts Council funds or federal funds.

Application Deadline: Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Applications may be submitted at any time as long as the project has not ended.

Final Report Due: 30 days after project ends, or July 30, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Central Time

Who Can Apply?

Organizations with a primary address (registered with the IRS and State of Oklahoma) in one of the rural opportunity counties listed above

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations incorporated in the State of Oklahoma as a Domestic Not for Profit Corporation
 - In good standing with the IRS (Organizations who have had their IRS status revoked are not eligible for Oklahoma Arts Council grant support. It is your responsibility to ensure that your status is current at the time of the application and throughout the life of your award.)
 - In good standing with the State of Oklahoma
 - Registered with a SAM UEI number and eligible to receive federal support (organizations cannot be listed under the SAM Exclusions federal debarred or suspended list)
- City, county, and federally-recognized tribal governments
- Public libraries

What Types of Projects Can Be Supported?

Grants can support projects associated with capacity building/professional development, learning-based, or audience-based arts programs. Projects can be new or ongoing but cannot end before the submission of an application. Examples of projects include:

Capacity Building and Professional Development

- Programs that increase an organization's or community's capacity to provide arts experiences and programming, to include but not limited to:
 - Arts-focused organizational planning, board development and succession planning, audience development or marketing, organization and program evaluation, program and budget evaluation, strategic planning, volunteer management, etc.

Learning-Based Arts Programs

- Classes and workshops (frequency and duration may vary; focus should be on meaningful hands-on learning)
- Online/virtual learning-based arts programs

Audience-Based Arts Programs

- Performances
- Exhibitions
- Festivals
- Online/virtual audience-based arts programs

Artistic Disciplines: The Oklahoma Arts Council uses artistic quality as one of its review criteria for grants. Artistic disciplines include, but are not limited to, music, dance, folk/traditional arts, literary arts, media arts, theatre, and visual arts. If you have questions about the eligibility of your project, please contact an Oklahoma Arts Council program director.

What Expenses Are Allowable?

Allowable Expenses:

- Artistic and administrative payroll expenses for arts-related programming and administration, such as salaries, benefits, and contracts
- Facility and operational expenses such as administrative costs, rent, mortgage, utilities, security, building maintenance, cleaning or sanitation, etc. directly related to arts programming and administration
- Consulting, planning, and evaluation contracts to support arts capacity building
- Arts program-related expenses such as marketing, consumable supplies, rental fees, etc.

Unallowable Expenses: Funds cannot be used to support loss of revenue, debt repayment, subgranting, duties or expenses related to fundraising and/or lobbying, capital expenditures and/or building improvements, permanent art installations, activities for which college credit is given, activities or expenses that may advance or inhibit any religious belief, events that are not open to the public, cash prizes or awards, and hospitality expenses (i.e., food, drink, receptions, parties, galas).

Funding Priorities

The Oklahoma Arts Council has the following priorities for investment:

1. Organizations that are located in and/or primarily serve geographically isolated and/or socioeconomically underresourced communities
2. Organizations that represent, serve, and/or have missions that focus on arts access to culturally diverse communities
3. Organizations with programming with a focus on underrepresented and/or underresourced communities or populations and/or market their programs to encourage inclusion of diverse populations

How to Apply

Step 1: Your organization must be verified in the Oklahoma Arts Council grant portal before applying for this grant opportunity. If your organization is new to Oklahoma Arts Council grants, you must create a new account in the Fluxx grant portal and complete the eligibility verification process (which may take up to 15 days to review and process). If you have questions, contact our grants office at grants@arts.ok.gov or 405-521-2040.

Step 2: Once your organization is verified, you can start an application from the Apply for Funding page. Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on the application deadline date published on the grant program guidelines. If an application deadline falls on a weekend or state holiday, the application will be due by 5:00 p.m. on the next business day. Late submissions are subject to the noncompliance policies as outlined in the General Grant Terms and Conditions.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. My organization is already receiving funding through another Oklahoma Arts Council grant program. Can I apply for a Rural Arts Opportunity Grant?

A. Yes. If your organization's primary address (registered with the IRS and State of Oklahoma) is in one of the identified counties and is selected to receive Rural Arts Opportunity Grant funding, you will need to provide a separate 1:1 match (100%) for the award, none of which may not come from another Oklahoma Arts Council grant award or federal funds. Half of the match (50%) may be in-kind support.

Q. What types of artistic disciplines can be supported?

A. The Oklahoma Arts Council uses artistic quality as one of its review criteria for grants. Artistic disciplines include, but are not limited to, music, theatre, dance, literary arts, media arts, and visual arts. If you have questions about the eligibility of your project, please contact an Oklahoma Arts Council program director.

Q. Can these grant funds support a memorial sculpture, mural, or other permanent artwork?

A. Unfortunately, no. Rural Arts Opportunity Grants cannot be used to support capital improvements/expenses including the creation of permanent artwork or the improvement of buildings/properties.

Q. We are offering free tickets to the community for a program/field trip we've already planned. Is this project eligible for funding?

A. Unfortunately, no. While discounted tickets may help broaden access, Rural Arts Opportunity Grants can only be used for projects that are intentionally designed for capacity building/professional development, learning-based, or audience-based arts programs. For more information, see the What Types of Projects Can Be Supported? section above.

Rural Arts Opportunity Grant Process

1. Request access to the grant portal
2. Submit an application
3. Application is reviewed by Oklahoma Arts Council
4. Award notification (if the project is selected for funding)
5. Authorizing Official accepts grant contract
6. Project activity occurs
7. Grant Administrator submits final report
8. Grant payment is processed

Grant Requirements

If selected for funding, grantee organizations must comply with all requirements as outlined in the Legal Assurances/General Grant Terms, grant contract, and grant program guidelines, including but not limited to the following:

- Signed electronic grant contract by the deadline specified in the award notification email
- Updated contact, mailing, and payment/banking information with the Oklahoma Arts Council and Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES) vendor office
- Use of Oklahoma Arts Council and National Endowment for the Arts logos and acknowledgement of support
- Timely submission of required reports

Who to Contact for Help

For questions about this grant program, contact Molly O'Connor, Director of Rural and Creative Community Outreach, at molly.oconnor@arts.ok.gov or (405) 317-3297.

For questions about grant portal access, contact Martyna Sandoval, Grants and Programs Associate, at martyna.sandoval@arts.ok.gov or 405-521-2040.

For questions about managing your grant award, contact Thomas Tran, Grants Director, at thomas.tran@arts.ok.gov or 405-521-2041.