

# Institutional Support Grant Program

## Program Overview and Application Instructions

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

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### Institutional Support Grant Program

Institutional Support (IS) is a three-year grant program that provides general operating support for arts nonprofits with an established record of high-quality programmatic service and administrative stability. This includes arts organizations that produce, present, or exhibit works of art, artist service organizations, art councils, and community art schools, as well as cultural arts organizations.

Institutional Support is a three-year grant program for projects taking place in the upcoming triennium for FY26-FY28.

### Program Deadlines

Draft Review Deadline	APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Final Report Due Date
Thursday, March 27, 2025	Thursday, April 3, 2025, 4:30 p.m. CST	July 1, 2025	June 30, 2026	June 30, 2026

Incomplete or late applications are not accepted.

Program Officer: Jess Christy | Email: [jesschristy@nd.gov](mailto:jesschristy@nd.gov) | Phone: (701) 328-7592

Contact the program officer for application support and/or questions.

Alternate application formats available upon request.

### Contents

<b>Program Overview</b> .....	2
<b>Application Instructions</b> .....	8

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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## Institutional Support Grant Program

### Program Goals

- Arts organizations effectively manage and apply resources to maximize impact for North Dakotans.
- North Dakota audiences are more likely to participate in relevant, inclusive, and accessible quality arts experiences.
- North Dakotan communities are stronger or more vibrant because of art's impact on social, civic, or economic life.

### Eligibility

- **An arts-producing organization** – An arts organization or arts affiliate that is primarily engaged in conceiving or creating artistic work and in assembling the artistic elements for its productions, performances, or exhibitions.
- **An arts-presenting organization** – An arts organization whose work consists of engaging artists, touring companies, or exhibitions that are external to the institution, including curatorial vision that is connected to mission and community.
- **An artist service organization** – An arts organization that plays a significant supporting role in service to practicing professional artists.
- **An arts council** – An organization or local government entity with a mission and activities to primarily stimulate and promote the arts, increase access to the arts, and/or increase funding for the arts within a specific geographic area.
- **A community arts school** – An arts education organization with a community-focused mission that provides open enrollment and arts instruction to individuals of varying ages or abilities by sharing knowledge and promoting the development of skills.
- **An affiliate arts-presenting or arts-producing organization hosted within a North Dakota 501(c)(3) tax-exempt institution or public institution** – An arts affiliate is a distinct program or division within a public or 501(c)(3) nonprofit non-arts organization (such as an arts division of a city or tribal government, a public or nonprofit college or university, or a community service nonprofit) that primarily provides arts programming or services to the general public. It has a distinct and separate budget from the host organization for arts programming.
  - *An affiliate and its host institution may not both receive funding in the IS program; however, more than one affiliate of the same host may receive funding.*

**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
- Have been in existence and have had Federal 501(c)(3) status for a minimum of three (3) years, actively providing arts programming in North Dakota, before applying to the IS grant program for the first time
- Have at least one (1) part-time paid staff person in a contract or salaried position
- Have programming that includes at least four (4) separate public events per fiscal year

**Allowable Expenses**

Institutional Support grant funds may be used for a wide variety of expenses in the general operation of an organization. Many grantees use funds to support general artistic or administrative expenses such as salaries, hourly compensation, etc. Other allowable expenses including space rental, travel/per diem, outside professional services, marketing, advertising, program planning, education, and evaluation.

**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
- In-school curriculum projects, unless they have a local, regional, or statewide impact

**Ineligible Expenses (continued):**

- Out-of-state touring performances and exhibitions

**Ineligible Activities:**

- Funds are requested that violate any federal, state, or local laws, ordinances, or policies
- Funds are requested that attempt to influence any state or federal legislation or appropriation
- Funds are requested that are essentially for the religious socialization of the participants or audience
- Funds are requested for projects that discriminate against people or groups
- Funds are requested that are managed by another entity other than the applicant
- Funds are requested for events and activities that are not open to the general public

**Ineligible Applications:**

- Application is not complete and received by 4:30 p.m. CST on the application deadline
- Application uses NEA or other federal funds and/or NDCA funds toward the match

**Ineligible Applicants:**

- Applicant is a current grantee of NDCA's Community Arts Access grant program
- Applicant is not in compliance with any active grant agreement with NDCA
- Applicant has overdue reporting requirements from a previous NDCA grant agreement

**Grant Award Amount**

Minimum Award Amount: \$4,000

Maximum Award Amount: \$11,000

Matching Funds: No more than 50% of the total cash operating/programming costs may be requested from NDCA. For every one (1) NDCA dollar requested, the applicant must match or raise one (1) dollar from a cash source other than from NDCA or other federal agencies including the National Endowment for the Arts.

Funds must be expended in the fiscal year for which they are awarded. Unused grant funds cannot be carried over into the next fiscal year.

## Award

Applicants must meet basic expectations in all five (5) Institutional Support review criteria to receive an award. The amount of the award will be based on operating budget and panel adjudication and will vary depending on the overall number of grantees and the total dollars available for this grant program.

Budget allowing, NDCA may offer modest awards in addition to the base amounts for organizations who show exemplary community engagement and responsibilities practices.

## Grant Period

### Multiyear Funding

The Institutional Support grant program runs in a three-year grant cycle. Only one Institutional Support grant application will be accepted from an organization per triennium. Successful applicants will be awarded a proportion of available funding in each fiscal year.

An interim application review is required in years two and three of the multiyear grant cycle. The applicant will be expected to demonstrate that it continues to meet eligibility requirements.

Interim applications are reviewed by staff and do not undergo panel review.

Applicants are not guaranteed a specific dollar amount for the entire three-year period. Instead, NDCA's board will make a commitment to provide annual grants for a three-year period based on the successful interim review process. Additionally, all grants are subject to available funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the North Dakota State Legislature.

## 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](mailto:administrator@grantinterface.com)).
- 2) Panels: Panelists are selected annually; visit [arts.nd.gov/get-involved/become-panelist](https://www.arts.nd.gov/get-involved/become-panelist). Meetings are open to the public. Anyone may attend by listening to the discussion but may not present or participate. See <https://www.arts.nd.gov/ndca-meetings> for dates.

3) Review Criteria: The panel evaluates each application based on the degree to which the applicant addresses the five (5) review criteria. Panelists individually score complete applications. Those scores are averaged to arrive at the final panel score.

The approximate breakdown for each budget tier is as follows:

- a. Budgets \$150,000 and over
- b. Budgets below \$150,000

4) Panel Score: To be recommended for an award, an applicant must receive an average total score of 60 or more out of 100, or 60%.

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

### **Review Criteria**

#### 1. Quality of Programs (0-25 points)

Quality and achievements of artistic and administrative leadership  
Quality of programs (artistic and public) consistent with the applicant's mission statement

#### 2. Community, Engagement, and Public Benefit (0-25 points)

A commitment to outreach and education, if included in the mission, to enhance the quality of life in North Dakota

#### 3. Expanding Access (0-20 points)

Evidence of efforts to reach areas or communities with limited services and steps taken to ease/lessen any barriers to participation

#### 4. Planning and Evaluation (0-15 points)

Evidence of thoughtful strategic or multi-year planning, including succession  
Evidence that evaluation is utilized  
Evidence of an ongoing ability to achieve measurable outcomes

#### 5. Financials (0-15 points)

Development of additional sources of financial support  
Organizational and fiscal stability

## **If Funded**

### **Notification and Agreement**

- Communication regarding the grant award is via email (administrator@grantinterface.com).
- An authorized signer for the application will need to complete an online grant agreement.

### **Payment**

- **Timing and Disbursement:** Contingent on approved application and subsequent final reports, payment will be made in August or September of each year.
- **Return of Funds:** The final report must show expenditures at or greater to the budgeted amount and match requirements 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.
- **Final Reports:**
  - An online final report for year one is due by June 30, 2026, and must include documentation and evidence of evaluation.
  - 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

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## 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](https://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 “Institutional Support FY26 Application.”

## Application Support

If you are a first-time applicant or have questions after reviewing the guidelines and the application, contact the program officer.

### Draft Application Review

You may have your application reviewed. Send an email request to the program officer by Thursday, March 27, 2025.

## 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 after the application is successfully submitted. If you do not receive a confirmation email ([administrator@grantinterface.com](mailto:administrator@grantinterface.com)), contact the program officer.



## Application Requirements

1. Applicant Information
2. Narrative
3. Outcomes
4. Statement of Financial Activities
5. Support Materials
6. Work Samples and Documentation
7. Board List
8. Staff List
9. Financial Statement or Independent Audit
10. Determination Letter

## Applicant Information

### **NEA Questions** *(Required)*

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

### **Organization Questions**

#### **SAM Unique Entity ID** *(Required)*

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 <https://sam.gov/content/home>
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.

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

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

#### **Organization History** *(Required)* (1,500 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 over the past five (5) years?

## Narrative

**Project Title** (*Required*) (75 maximum characters)  
Enter “General Operating Support”

**Project Start Date** (*Required*) Enter “July 1, 2025”

**Project End Date** (*Required*) Enter “June 30, 2026”

1) Organization Description (*Required*) (1,000 maximum characters)

- Give a brief description of the organization and its structure, including staff, board, volunteers, and support organizations as well as number of individuals in membership and/or benefitting.
- Briefly describe the organization’s activities over the last three (3) years, including the obstacles that have been faced and how they were overcome.

2) Artistic Priorities (*Required*) (1,500 maximum characters)

- Include the artistic priorities of the organization (artistic excellence, arts education, service to other organizations, etc.)
- Explain how artistic quality is determined.
- Describe the process for artist selection. Are North Dakota artists included?

3) Arts Activities (*Required*) (1,500 maximum characters)

- Detail four (4) separate art activities per year for the last two (2) years.

For each activity include:

1. Fiscal year and activity start and end date
2. Venue name, city, and state
3. Name of activity and purpose
4. Key artists
5. Number of adult participants and audience, if applicable
6. Number of under 18 participants and audience, if applicable.

*Example:*

FY24 October 15-17, 2023

Lobby of Art Gallery, Bismarck

Visual Art Showing for ND Artist

Jane Smith (2D artist)

Adult audience members: 742

Under 18 audience members: 139

4) Community, Engagement, and Public Benefit (*Required*) (1,500 maximum characters)

- Describe the organization's community, including economic and population characteristics.
- Name community partners included in planning, implementation, and participation in the programs.
- Explain how arts programs are promoted and audiences developed, including outreach and/or educational programming.
- Describe key accomplishments, current challenges, and plans going forward.

5) Expanding Access (*Required*) (1,500 maximum characters)

- NDCA recognizes that to become a culturally sensitive organization can take time. List any internal or external efforts your organization is currently undertaking to expand access and remove barriers for your community. For instance, if there are costs associated with attendance, what considerations are made for those who may find this a barrier? (e.g., free admission, membership discounts, financial aid, and/or scholarships, etc.)
- Explain any anticipated short and long-term outcomes that will be achieved to strengthen a commitment to these goals.

Accessibility

- The organization is required to be programmatically and physically accessible. In what ways does the applicant ensure that people with disabilities can participate? Examples might include ADA accessible venue, ASL interpretation, audio described performance, large print programs, sensory tours, etc.
- Describe the process of how a participant or attendee with a disability can request accommodations to access the funded activities and/or programs.
- Describe the applicant's board-approved accessibility plan. (*Required*) (1,000 maximum characters)

## **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.

### What to Include in an Accessibility Plan

Plans will vary and should be designed specific to efforts to make programming and facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. Efforts to address general geographic or financial accessibility may be described in other areas of the application.

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](mailto: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://arts.gov/impact/accessibility).

### 6) Planning and Evaluation (*Required*) (1,000 maximum characters)

- Explain how the organization's strategic or multi-year plan was developed and how it is implemented on a regular basis.
- Explain defined, measurable, and meaningful methods the organization uses to measure success.
- Explain any significant managerial/administrative changes in the past two (2) years, and if the organization anticipates any such changes in the near future.
- Attach the current Strategic Plan or Multiyear Plan (upload a pdf) or provide a link to the current Strategic Plan or Multiyear Plan.

### 7) Financials (*Required*) (1,000 maximum characters)

- Describe the organization's financial history and current financial situation. If there is a current deficit, describe the cause and plans to address it. Include any major changes in funding that might occur over the next three (3) years.
- Describe the organization's primary sources of funding for programs other than NDCA's grant.
- If the organization has an endowment or reserve account, explain its anticipated use.

## Outcomes

Institutional Support applicants must identify three (3) distinct, measurable outcomes that are related to one (1) or more Institutional Support Program Goals. Grantees will be expected to evaluate activities, maintain financial records, and demonstrate measurable achievements during the three-year grant period.

Outcomes must support one of the following Institutional Support program outcomes:

- Arts organizations effectively manage and apply resources to maximize impact for North Dakotans.
- North Dakota audiences are more likely to participate in relevant, inclusive, and accessible quality arts experiences.
- North Dakotan communities are stronger or more vibrant because of art's impact on social, civic, or economic life.

**Organizational Outcome Statements** (*Required*) (250 maximum characters each)

Identify three measurable outcomes. These are brief statements of key organizational priorities.

**Organizational Outcomes - Description** (*Required*) (2,000 maximum characters each)

- Describe how the outcomes will be achieved and how they will benefit the communities served.
- Explain how each outcome will be evaluated.

Organization Outcome Tips: Outcomes add to the organization's strategic growth, are specific, and can be reasonably achieved within outreach partnership activities and/or programming.

**Evaluation Tip:** For information about outcomes-based evaluation, applicants may refer to "Getting Started with Program Evaluation: A Guide for Arts Organizations" located here [nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Getting-Started-with-Program-Evaluation.pdf](https://nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Getting-Started-with-Program-Evaluation.pdf), published by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

## Statement of Financial Activities

Download the Statement of Financial Activities form on the IS grant webpage or here:

<https://www.arts.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/grants/ISFY26StatementFinancialActivitiesforApplication.xlsx>. Complete and upload to the online application.

## Support Materials

Include materials that will help the panelists understand the scope, breadth, and emphasis of the applicant's work and programming.

### **Current Publications** *(Required)*

Provide a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of two (2) current newsletters, annual reports, and/or other self-published documents. (upload separate PDFs)

### **Current Programs** *(Required)*

Provide a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of three (3) current brochures, catalogs, or other materials highlighting artistic events, seasons, etc. (upload separate PDFs)

## Work Samples and Documentation

### **Work Samples** *(Required)*

- Submit three (3) examples of arts programming from within the past three (3) years (video, audio, images, and/or written materials). Examples should address the review criteria of artistic excellence and quality.
- Provide a description for each sample including date, title/work/event/program, and main artists involved.

### **Community and/or Educational Outreach Documentation** *(Required)*

- Provide three (3) examples of documentation (video, images, and/or written materials) that illustrate the applicant's community work and/or educational outreach efforts.
- Provide a description for each sample including date, purpose of the activity, and level(s) of involvement (e.g., funder, provider, host of activity).

### **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.

### **Images**

Provide a **JPG or JPEG** file(s) for **up to five (5) images** with a maximum of **4 MB each**.

### Video

Provide a URL link for **up to two (2) video samples** for a maximum total length of **five (5) minutes**.

- Video files must be uploaded to [youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/) or [vimeo.com/](https://www.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 **five (5) minutes**.

- Audio files must be uploaded to [soundcloud.com](https://www.soundcloud.com/) or [dropbox.com](https://www.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 Materials

Provide a **PDF file** for **up to five (5) pages** of written work.

- Include only the material intended for panel review
- Remove title pages, table of contents, etc.

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](https://support.google.com/youtube).
- For Vimeo support, visit <https://help.vimeo.com/hc/en-us>.

## Board List and Staff List

### **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

### **Staff List** *(Required)*

Provide a list that includes the following information below (upload a PDF) or provide a website link to the staff information on the organization's website.

1. Name
2. Position
3. City and state of residence

## Financial Statements or Independent Audit

1. Attach the applicant's internal board-approved financial statements (a balance sheet and income and expense statement) for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 as separate PDF files or provide links to the organization's independent audits for fiscal year 2024 and 2025. *(Required)*

2. Date of organizational nonprofit status. *(Required)*

3. Total average income for the current fiscal year (2025) and most recently completed fiscal year (2024). *(Required)*

## Determination Letter

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)