



SPRINGFIELD AREA
ARTS COUNCIL

Regional Arts Partner

Springfield Area Arts Council
Sarah Beuning, Board President
Bella Szabo, Executive Director

Regional Arts Partner

Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2026
Deadline: October 31, 2025

Springfield Area Arts Council acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

Illinois
ARTS
Council

Table of Contents

REGIONAL ARTS PARTNER GRANT DETAILS 3

COMPLIANCE..... 5

APPLICAITON OVERVIEW 7

EVALUATION CRITERIA 8

- Link [IAC Policies and Priorities](#)
- Link [IAC Accessibility Resources](#)
- Link [SAAC Online Submission Form](#)
- Link [SAAC Logo](#)
- Link [IAC Logo](#)

Accessible Guidelines

To request accommodation or obtain an alternate format of the guidelines and application, contact the Springfield Area Arts Council’s Executive Director.

Bella Szabo
Phone: +1 (217)753-3519
Email: director@springfieldartsco.org

Springfield Area Arts Council Contact

For specific information on the grant, contact:

Jay Shanle
Program Director
Phone: +1 (217)753-3519
Email: office@springfieldartsco.org

REGIONAL ARTS PARTNER GRANT DETAILS

Overview

The Regional Arts Partner Grant (RAP) is a re-granting program designed to give the community more access to the arts, especially among under-served populations. The Springfield Area Arts Council (SAAC) awards project-based grants to community organizations that support the development of art projects in our service area of Sangamon and Menard counties. Through this program's partnership opportunities, SAAC aims to create lasting relationships with local businesses, organizations, and individuals, helping to enrich the community by promoting and supporting all art forms.

RAP grants support special projects, programs, events, and opportunities occurring between **December 1, 2025, and August 31, 2026.**

Organizations may not apply for more than one project or program in the FY 2026 Regional Arts Partner cycle. There is no fee to apply.

This program is funded by the Illinois Arts Council's (IAC) Regional Arts Partner Grant and matching funds from SAAC.

We welcome applications from a variety of eligible organizations, including first-time applicants. All first-time grant applicants must contact the program staff to discuss the project and determine eligibility, unless they have been awarded a grant from IAC previously. SAAC does not limit its RAP grants to member organizations. Grant Writing Workshops are offered to all applicants.

Nondiscrimination Policies

The Springfield Area Arts Council is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and fostering mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all individuals and groups.

Projects may focus on reaching a particular group or demographic, such as gender, disability, economic status, race, color, or national origin; however, they may not be exclusionary.

Program Requirements

- Adhere to [IAC's](#) and SAAC's Policies and Priorities (see page 6).
- Projects must have a public presentation or community service component.
- Recipients of grant funding are required to make reasonable efforts for programs to be accessible to the public. For further information and resources see the [Accessibility Resources](#) page on the IAC website.
- Applicants must disclose if they have applied to the IAC or another regranting agency for funds for the same project.

- Projects cannot begin before December 1, 2025, and must be completed by August 31, 2026.

Award Information

Grant requests are not to exceed \$2,000. Applicants may receive less than the requested amount.

No cost-matching is required; however, the project should show feasibility by including enough funds available to complete the project or showing a plan to accrue the remaining funds.

Applying for the RAP grant does not guarantee funding. Grants are allocated at the discretion of SAAC.

Eligibility

Not-for-Profit and For-Profit organizations are eligible to apply.

An applicant organization must have been in active service to the public for at least one year before the date of application. Organizations must be registered with the Office of the Illinois Secretary of State and be in good standing.

Organizations with which readers, advisory panelists, or Board members of IAC and / or SAAC are affiliated are eligible to apply. However, a reader, panelist, or Board member may not be the authorizing official signing any documents relating to an application or grant award.

Projects taking place outside of Sangamon or Menard counties are ineligible.

Individuals are not eligible to apply.

State agencies and their affiliates, with the exception of state museums, libraries, colleges and universities, are not eligible to apply. State agencies are those entities defined by the Office of the Comptroller in Procedure 27.50.10 in the SAMS manual.

Grant Writing Workshops

Virtual workshops are offered **October 10 at 12 PM and October 15 at 1 PM.**

Please contact the office at (217) 753-3519 or office@springfieldartsco.org to register.

Deadline

The FY26 RAP Grant deadline is **October 31, 2025**. Applications must be submitted by 11:59 P.M. CT to [SAAC's online submission system](https://saac.org/submit) or emailed to the SAAC Office at office@springfieldartsco.org.

Late, ineligible, and incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

In the event of an emergency, SAAC may adjust application deadlines for affected applicants. If the deadline is extended, an announcement will be posted on our website.

Application Review

Applications which have been ruled ineligible or incomplete will not be reviewed.

After processing by our staff, acknowledgement of an eligible application is given after the grant deadline has passed and will include a grant number to be used in all future correspondence. An organization whose application is ineligible or incomplete will receive notification.

Applications are reviewed by advisory panelists based on the evaluation criteria (see page 8). The panel is composed of a diverse group of arts experts and other individuals. Panel members change regularly.

The final recommendations are presented to the SAAC board for their consideration and approval.

A record of the review process is maintained for all reviewed applications; applicants are encouraged to call for review feedback after receiving decision notification.

Notifications

All applicants will be notified of funding decisions once SAAC has finalized award decisions. Applicants approved for funding will receive, via email, instructions regarding requirements to accept and claim the grant (see Grant Acceptance section below). Once all documents have been returned via email to the SAAC Office and all requirements met, including the completion and filing of all previous fiscal year Final Reports, the grant will be processed, and the payment voucher will be submitted to SAAC's Bookkeeper. Once the payment voucher has been received, payments can take two to eight weeks.

COMPLIANCE

Grant Acceptance

For awards to be processed, all grant acceptance documents must be submitted to the SAAC Office. Grant acceptance is a multi-step process that requires email exchanges. It is the responsibility of the applicant to read all emails carefully and follow the instructions. The documents to be submitted include:

- Completed and signed W9 form
- Grant Agreement signed and dated by the authorizing official

Applicants approved for funding will be requested to email a W9. Following the receipt of this document, the Authorizing Official will be sent the Grant Agreement to sign.

Final Reports

The Final Report is due two weeks after completion of the project or no later than **September 15, 2026**, as stated on the grant agreement.

Before a grant is awarded, applicants must have submitted acceptable Final Reports by the due date(s) for all previous grants through SAAC.

The Final Report will report on activities that occurred during the grant period specified in the Grant Agreement. Failure to submit complete final reports will impact the awarding of any subsequent grant.

Crediting Requirements

Grantees must credit the IAC and SAAC in all public notices and promotion material in the following manner:

"This program is partially supported by a grant from the Springfield Area Arts Council through state funds provided by the Illinois Arts Council."



When possible, include the SAAC logo and IAC logo. You may download the SAAC logo from our [website](#) and IAC logo from their [website](#).

Policies and Priorities

RAP grants cannot support:

- capital improvements, construction, or for the purchase of permanent equipment above \$500
- scholarships
- deficit funding
- degree completion
- professional development
- fundraisers, benefits, or receptions
- social functions
- the purchase of alcohol

- inherently religious or political activities
- commercial advertising
- cash prizes, gifts, or giveaway items
- projects taking place outside of Sangamon or Menard counties in Illinois

Changes in Projects

Applicants must notify SAAC immediately of any significant changes in their project that occur after applying. If the project or the organization's capacity to carry out the project changes significantly before an award is made, then SAAC may revise or withdraw the funding recommendation.

Grantees are expected to carry out a project consistent with the proposal approved for funding by SAAC. If project changes are required, the grantee must submit a request with justification for the change(s) for review by SAAC. Approval is not guaranteed.

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

SAAC utilizes an online submission form to accept applications. The RAP online application consists of form field components and the uploading of required documents. Alternatively, applicants may submit their completed applications with required information via email or mail. Each component must be completed and submitted in the required format by the deadline.

How to Apply

- Verify eligibility.
- Contact SAAC Staff if you are a first-time grant applicant.
- Attend a Grant Writing Workshop if you are a first-time applicant or as needed.
- Prepare all required supporting documents (see page 6) and save them as PDFs.
- Go to SAAC [online submission system](#)
 - Upload all required attachments.
- Successfully submit the application.

Supporting Documents

All listed documents are required. Templates are provided as applicable with their respective requirements specified.

1. Application Form
2. Narrative
3. Project Budget
[This is not the operating budget of the organization.]
4. If a returning applicant: a set of up to 3 pieces of materials crediting SAAC and IAC for previous Regional Arts Partner Projects - a copy of a webpage may be submitted as evidence
5. If a first-time applicant: a single page stating "First-Time Applicant"

6. Last Fiscal Year's completed organizational Financial Statement
[This is not the project budget.]
7. If the Financial Statement reflects a spending deficit, provide a Financial Explanation
8. Current or Proposed Operating Budget of the organization
9. List of current Board of Directors with affiliations if applicable
10. Organization's current proof of Illinois Nonprofit / Not-for-Profit status or Articles of Incorporation

All documents must:

- Be saved as PDF files
- Be 8 ½ " x 11" with at least a 1" margin
- Use a 12-point or larger black type on a white background
- Have sequentially numbered pages with the applicant organization's name and attachment title on the top of each page. It is suggested to use the header/footer feature and page numbering tool in your word processor software.
- Be organized using the bold-face headings listed for each attachment
- Be named as follows: organization name, shortened if needed, or acronym, with name of attachment. Example: IllinoisArtsOrg_Narrative.pdf or IAO_Narrative.pdf

EVALUATION CRITERIA

A grant panel of five artists and community members, including a panelist from SAAC's Board of Directors, will review all applications and make funding recommendations to the SAAC Board. SAAC's Board President is an *ex officio* member of the panel and serves as the panel chairperson. The Board of Directors will ratify the recommendations, and organizations will be notified of the grant award decision (pending receipt of funding from IAC).

The following points will be considered when reviewing applications:

Objective Criteria

- If the organization received prior funding, then did they adhere to the agreement regarding acknowledgment of the Springfield Area Arts Council and the Illinois Arts Council in their publicity
- Number of people directly affected by this project
- Opportunities for Illinois visual, performing, or literary artists in the project
- Evidence of cash support for the project to show feasibility.
 - Including the grant amount, enough funds will be available to complete the project. If not, show a plan to accrue remaining funds.
 - What financial resources does the organization offer to support this project?
 - What would be the effect on the project if it receives little or no grant funding?
- Evidence of in-kind support for the project

Subjective Criteria

- What is the need in the community for the proposed project? Community need can be demonstrated in the following ways (the below is not an exhaustive list):
 - Demographic or statistical data showing disparities or needs
 - Direct input from community, partners, or stakeholders of need
 - Absence of similar programs, projects, or events
 - Identification of barriers to access
 - Alignment with local, cultural, or community values or identities
- What is the artistic quality and merit of the program? Quality and merit can be demonstrated in the following ways (the below is not an exhaustive list):
 - Clear, realistic goals and outcomes
 - Detailed feasibility plan
 - Evidence or assessment of impact
 - Capacity of the applicant to execute the project
 - Inclusion and accessibility strategies
 - Effective outreach, audience, and/or community engagement
- Is the project unique or innovative? Unique and innovative projects can be measured in the following ways (the below is not an exhaustive list):
 - First of its kind in the region or community
 - Addresses a previously unmet or under-addressed need
 - Uses novel delivery methods or formats
 - Integrates uncommon collaborations or cross-sector partnerships
 - Adapts or repurposes existing models in a new context
 - Demonstrates creative use of limited resources
 - Incorporates community in the creation process (co-creation)
 - Uses emerging technologies or techniques
 - Demonstrates measurable impact differentiators
 - Influences or inspires systemic change
- Does the project develop new audiences for the arts?
 - Who is the target audience?
- Are special or underserved populations affected by this project?
 - Does the project promote or preserve art forms from diverse cultural traditions?