



City of Dubuque, Iowa

ARTS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS FY27 GRANT PROGRAM

OPERATING SUPPORT

FY2027 FUNDING

GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The City of Dubuque Arts & Culture Grant Program supports operational expenses of nonprofit arts and culture organizations that pursue arts and cultural strategic initiatives that serve the residents of Dubuque. The Arts & Cultural Affairs Operating Support (OS) grant program is funded, administered, and managed by the City of Dubuque's Department of Economic Development, Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs. This program is intended to increase the Dubuque community's access to a wide variety of arts and culture experiences that cultivate creativity, learning, and participation in Dubuque's arts and culture landscape.

ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATION DEFINITION

An arts and culture organization is defined as an entity with a **primary purpose** to create, produce, present, or provide arts and culture programs, experiences, or activities for public audiences. Organizations must offer programs in an artistic discipline, operate as a museum, or provide informal learning in arts and culture disciplines.

The organization's **primary purpose** is assessed and verified by staff using the organization's website, mission, core activities, and IRS National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) codes. Assessment ruling(s) are final. Organizations determined by staff to be ineligible will not move forward and are specifically denied any appeals process.

FAIRNESS AND REPRESENTATION STATEMENT

The City of Dubuque Arts & Culture Grants Program(s) commits to fair treatment within the arts and culture sector by evaluating its programs and practices. The City recognizes the multiple benefits that arts and culture exploration provide, regardless of race, color, religion, age, disability, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity/expression.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- Applicant is an arts and culture organization as defined by grant guidelines
- Applicant is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with at least two years of programming documentation (IRS determination letter)

- Applicant serves residents of the city of Dubuque and programming occurs within the city of Dubuque limits
- Applicant will have a clean record of compliance and be in good standing with the City of Dubuque's Arts and Culture Grant Program(s)

INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- For-profit organizations, businesses, or sole proprietors
- Educational institutions including private or public K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and community colleges
- City of Dubuque government departments or entities
- Individual artists
- Nonprofit organizations that are not arts and cultures organizations (for example; social service, nonprofits, religious institutions, athletic groups, etc.)
- Organizations with a **delinquent** FY25 Capacity Building or FY26 Operating Support City of Dubuque Arts and Culture Grant Program Final Report will be ineligible for one grant cycle
- The use of a fiscal agent/sponsor is not allowed

GRANT AWARD

- Funding is calculated at 6% of certified operating expenses, not to exceed \$30,000
- Awards may be less than requested
- No match is required
- A total of \$250,000 in funding will be distributed

ONLINE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants must submit applications via the City of Dubuque's SlideRoom, an online application portal, by 11:59PM on April 17, 2026. Applications will not be accepted in any other format. Late, incomplete, or ineligible applications will not be accepted. Applicants can access the current online application requirements at: [FY27 Arts & Culture Operating Support](#)

TIMELINE

Application Open: FY27 application available at www.cityofdubuque.org/artsgrants	March 6, 2026
Informational Webinar on the City website	March 6, 2026
Application Deadline:	April 17, 2026, 11:59 PM
Grant Review Panel Meeting	June 2, 2026
Grants Subcommittee Meeting – Funding Recommendations	June 11, 2026
A&C Affairs Commission Meeting – Funding Recommendations Approval	June 23, 2026
City Council – Approval of Funding	July 6, 2026
Award Notification:	July 2026
Disbursement of Funds:	(anticipated) August 2026

Organizations who have completed their previous FY final report prior to Aug. 1, 2026	Funding processed Aug. 1, 2026
Organizations who submit their previous FY final report August 2-31, 2026	Funding processed September 1, 2026
Period of Performance:	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027
Final Report Due	August 31, 2027

REVIEW PROCESS

Department Eligibility Review

Submitted applications are reviewed by staff for completion, eligibility, and adherence to published funding priorities and guidelines. New application information or subsequent application clarification submitted after a program deadline is not considered. Staff will also review an applicant's record of compliance and good standing with City of Dubuque's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs. Applications or applicants determined by staff to be ineligible or incomplete will not move forward to panel review and are specifically denied any appeals process.

Competitive Panel Review

Eligible applications will be referred to a competitive review by a volunteer citizen panel of regional arts and culture professionals with appropriate expertise commensurate to the purpose of the grant program.

Funding Recommendations

Scoring and allocation recommendations are presented, reviewed, and voted upon by the Arts and Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission before advancing to Dubuque City Council for final approval.

Decision Notification

Applicants will be notified of Operating Support funding decisions via email by July 8, 2026. Applicants are notified of the status of their application whether they *are* or *are not* awarded funding. Applicants will be contacted if any additional information is required and are encouraged to refrain from contacting staff for application status updates until funding decisions are made.

Application Questions & Scoring Rubric

The Operating Support Program Scoring Rubric will be used by the panel to evaluate grant applications. Application questions are provided for reference only. Applicants must review and complete application requirements in the SlideRoom portal. Each section has criteria and corresponding point values to ensure a fair review process. The rubric is on a scale of 25 points.

Rating Criteria

- Programs & Services
- Management, Financial, & Strategic Planning
- Community Support
- Community Engagement
- Key Initiative(s) in FY27

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

If awarded funding, the organization must acknowledge the City of Dubuque's support in appropriate communications pertaining to the grant. Recognition guidelines and logos are available for [on the City's website](#).

REPORTING

Applicants must submit a performance report within 60 days of the end of the funding cycle no later than August 31, 2027. Applicants agree to retain all financial records, reporting documents, and all other records pertinent to the City of Dubuque grant program for a period of three calendar years beyond the contract.

ACCESSIBILITY AND QUESTIONS

We are committed to making our programs and services accessible to everyone. Please contact the Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs at (563) 690-6059 or bspurlin@cityofdubuque.org to request any accommodations, translation, interpretation, or other assistance you need in completing this process. The applicant is solely responsible for the content and timely submission of this grant.

FOR REFERENCE

CITY OF DUBUQUE ARTS AND CULTURE GOALS FROM THE ARTS AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN*

- 1. Economic Development:** Encouragement and support of arts and culture are not only quality of life issues, but also a serious economic development strategy. The contributions of the arts and artists are supported and leveraged for economic development, boosting the city's brand and aiding talent attraction and retention.
- 2. Inclusivity:** Arts and culture in Dubuque promote inclusivity, diversity, harmony and understanding.
- 3. Integration of Arts and Cultural Community into City Leadership:** The arts and cultural community – artists, performers, administrators, and so on – are fully integrated into the City's decision-making conversations. They are incorporated into economic development, planning, commercial, and education strategies. Leadership in these sectors communicate well with the arts community and vice-versa. In addition, the contributions of the arts and of artists to the city's prosperity are recognized.
- 4. Opportunity and Accessibility:** Dubuque is a city with participatory cultural opportunities in all corners of the community. Barriers to participation, whether physical, intellectual, economic or other, are minimized or removed to encourage equitable opportunities for cultural engagement.
- 5. Involvement and Participation:** Residents of Dubuque actively participate in the arts and culture. Arts and cultural entities and other sectors enable greater involvement and participation among Dubuque's citizens and visitors.
- 6. Clear Policies and Strong Management:** Clear policies, guidelines and procedures enable governance of the city's arts and cultural sector and the municipality's involvement with it.

PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES TOWARDS THE GOALS OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN*

Priority A: Promote and support arts and culture as Dubuque's competitive edge.

- a. Establish multiple funding streams to support arts and cultural activity.
- b. Develop, attract and retain creative talent.
- c. Develop a regulatory or business incentive framework that promotes and protects Dubuque's arts and cultural assets.
- d. Undertake a strategic branding, marketing and communications campaign promoting awareness of Dubuque's arts and cultural community at home and in other markets and attracting participants from outside Dubuque.

Priority B: Boost capacity for arts and culture to thrive.

- a. Designate and empower an individual or entity to lead development of the cultural sector.
- b. Clarify roles, responsibilities and guidelines for the Arts and Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission to best leverage their energy and knowledge to the benefit of arts and culture in Dubuque.
- c. Establish a public art policy framework conducive to the arts and cultural activity.
- d. Facilitate communication and coordination among the arts and cultural sector.
- e. Right-size facilities to meet capacity needs for rehearsal, exhibition/performance, education and administration.
- f. Develop organizational and professional capacity.

Priority C: Foster engagement at all levels

- a. Deepen appreciation for arts and culture among the general public.
- b. Provide arts education opportunities to people of all ages, skill levels, and income levels.
- c. Increase availability and accessibility of arts and cultural offerings.
- d. Nurture individual artists, from student to amateur to professional.
- e. Stimulate volunteerism.
- f. Inspire and diversify leadership.

Priority D: Cultivate connections.

- a. Ensure arts and culture in Dubuque is inclusive and welcoming of people of all backgrounds and interests.
- b. Develop ties among the arts and the broader community, increasing visibility and relevance of arts and culture.
- c. Integrate leadership of the arts and cultural sector with leaders in other sectors of Dubuque by forging new relationships and strengthening existing ones between the arts and cultural sector and the business, public, non-profit and educational sectors.

Additional sub-strategies are outlined in the City of Dubuque Arts and Culture Master Plan at <https://www.cityofdubuque.org/DocumentCenter/View/36680/Master-Plan-Priorities-and-Strategies>

Additional documents for consideration when discussing how your organization advances the City of Dubuque's goals, priorities, and plans:

- City Council Goals and Priorities
- Imagine Dubuque Plan
- 50% by 2030 Community Climate Action and Resiliency Plan
- Equitable Poverty Reduction & Prevention Plan

** This document adopted in (year) references concepts prohibited in IA HF856 amending Ch 19 of the Iowa Code. It was adopted prior to HF856 passage on May 27, 2025. (If appropriate to add: Changes will be made if and when the document is revised.)*