

City of Dubuque, Iowa FY26 ARTS & CULTURE GRANT PROGRAM

SPECIAL PROJECTS FY 2026 FUNDING

GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The City of Dubuque Arts & Culture Special Projects Grant program provides funds to cultivate unique and innovative creative arts and cultural experiences that serve the residents of Dubuque. The Special Projects 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.

CULTURAL FAIRNESS STATEMENT

The City of Dubuque Arts & Culture Grants Program commits to fair access 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 the following eligibility requirements:

- Applicant is a Dubuque-based organization who operate as a nonprofit, tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of IRS Organizations, or
- Applicant is a Dubuque-based group with their own specific mission, governing structure and budget, operating under the incorporated status of a Dubuque-based fiscal agent
- 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)
- Only 1 application per eligible applicant will be accepted; an applicant can be identified as a partnering entity within another application, but that application cannot be for the same project

INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Any organization or group based outside of Dubuque city limits
- For-profit organizations, businesses, or sole proprietors
- Educational institutions including private or public K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and community colleges
- Individual artists
- Organizations with a delinquent FY24 Special Projects Grant Final Report or FY25 Operating Support Grant Final Report will be ineligible for one grant cycle

FUNDING GUIDELINES

- Minimum Request: \$1,000
- Maximum Request: \$8,000
- 50% Cash Match

Applicants must demonstrate investment in a project by providing a 50% cash match to the grant request for project expenses. For example, an applicant that requests \$2,000 in grant funds must have at least \$1,000 in matching funds of cash match expenses or a minimum total project budget of \$3,000.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Projects should create unique and innovative arts and cultural experiences or arts and cultural learning opportunities that stand out from the applicant's previous offerings in significant ways. Applicants may apply for support of an annual event or series only if they can demonstrate how the event or series is unique to the eligible funding period and worthy of support. Project content must change from year to year.

Proposed public activities requesting grant funding must be conducted within Dubuque city limits; eligible expenses may be paid to vendors based outside of Dubuque.

Projects may include the creation, performance, exhibition, publication, or presentation of arts and cultural experiences or arts and cultural learning opportunities related to:

- Cultural and Historic Resources
- Folk and Traditional Arts
- Theater, Performing Arts
- Spoken Word
- Literature
- Dance
- Music
- Film
- Visual Art: 2D or 3D, Digital, New Media, Installation Art, Murals or Public Art, Performance Art
- Other Arts and Cultural Learning Opportunities

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Eligible expenses are those dedicated specifically to the project and can include:

- Artist or Contractor Fees
- Licensing or Subscription Fees
- Supplies and Materials
- Space and Equipment Rental
- Domestic Travel
- Marketing and Publicity
- Equipment purchases under \$500
- Employee or volunteer costs essential to meeting project outcome

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES

- Projects that occur prior to or after the funding period
- Ongoing projects or programs with arbitrary beginning and end dates
- Projects or activities not available to the public
- General operating expenses
- Religious, political, and sports activities
- Fundraising or benefit events
- Competitions, contests, or awards to honor or recognize achievement
- Food, beverage, or catering costs
- International travel
- Capital projects, i.e. construction, property renovation
- Major equipment purchases (over \$500)
- Regrants
- Lobbying activities
- Acquisition or purchase of artwork for permanent collections

ONLINE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants must submit applications via the City of Dubuque's SlideRoom, an online application portal, by 11:59PM on April 25, 2025. 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: [FY26 Arts & Culture Special Projects](#)

TIMELINE

Application Open: FY26 application available at www.cityofdubuque.org/artsgrants	March 17, 2025
Application Deadline:	April 25, 2025, by 11:59 PM
Grant Review Panel Meeting	June 10, 2025
Grants Subcommittee Meeting – Funding Recommendations	June 19, 2025
A&C Affairs Commission Meeting – Funding Recommendations Approval	June 24, 2025
City Council – Approval of Funding	July 7, 2025
Award Notification:	July 2025
Disbursement of Funds (anticipated):	August 2025
Period of Performance:	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026
Final Report Due	August 31, 2026

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

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 Special Projects funding decisions via email by July 10, 2025. 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 Special Projects Grant 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 30 points.

RATING CRITERIA

- Applicant overview
- Project description
- Public value
- Project timeline
- Goals and evaluation
- Project Budget

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

If awarded funding, the applicant must acknowledge the City of Dubuque's support in appropriate communications pertaining to this grant. Recognition guidelines and logos are [available for download at 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, 2026. The applicant agrees 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. Failure to complete the final report by the deadline will result in the applicant being deemed ineligible for the next cycle of Arts & Culture grant funding.

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 artsculture@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.