
Arts & Health Initiative

Background

Arts & Health is a broad framework of practices that uses the power of the arts to enhance health and well-being in diverse institutional and community contexts. The fields of *arts in medicine*, *arts in healthcare*, *creative aging* and *creative arts therapies* are a few examples. A growing body of data and research recognizes the arts having a lifelong impact on a person's health and health outcomes.

Participating in the arts has been shown to build healthy social connections and improve community well-being through shared purpose and experiences. The arts have been long known to build community and bring people together. *“The absence of social connections and a sense of belonging in communities has been linked to a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, stroke, depression, anxiety, suicidality, and premature death. The mortality impact is “similar to that caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, and even greater than that associated with obesity and physical inactivity”*, according to [a 2023 US Surgeon General’s Advisory, Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation](#).

New Mexico Arts – Arts & Health Initiative

New Mexico Arts is facilitating collaborative approaches to developing arts-based practices that contribute to community health and individual well-being.

The Arts & Health Initiative identifies three strategic priorities: *connect, convene and contribute*.

- **Connect:** New Mexico Arts will connect partners in state government, grant makers, nonprofit health, social service and arts organizations that are addressing issues of social connectedness and belonging to improve individual and community well-being.
- **Convene:** New Mexico Arts will establish regular convenings and provide technical assistance to support best practices, capacity building and collaborative approaches to the challenges of social connectedness and belonging.
- **Contribute:** New Mexico Arts will offer Collaborative Planning Grants (see below) that address social connectedness and belonging.

Arts & Health Collaborative Planning Grant

New Mexico Arts recognizes that thoughtful planning is essential for the successful integration of arts-based practices to improve community and individual well-being. The Arts & Health Collaborative Planning Grant will empower organizations to engage in a local planning process by offering funding and technical assistance. This process should result in a written strategy document for use in future funding proposals and project implementation.

New Mexico Arts intends to fund approximately 8 organizations that impact a broad constituency within their communities. Eligible organizations that reach populations historically underserved by the arts due to ethnicity, economics, geography, or disability are encouraged to apply.

If selected for funding, awardees are required to create a [*Collaborative Community Plan*](#) that addresses, but is not limited to, the following:

- Collaborating Organizations
- Community Health Need
- Goals & Objectives
- Intended Audience(s)
- Arts Integration & Interventions
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Timeline/Phases
- Budget Projections
- Evaluation Plan
- Sustainability
- Communications

Capacity Building & Technical Assistance:

The Arts & Health Initiative will foster peer-to-peer learning, engage grantees in virtual sessions, panel presentations, and hands-on planning activities that will focus on best practices, capacity building, and collaborative approaches. Grantees will be required to consult with the Arts & Health Initiative coordinator to support planning progress and final report development.

Applicants may request a fixed grant amount of \$5,000. Matching funds are not required. The grant period is January 1, 2026 - June 15, 2026.

Eligibility

Nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c) (3), units of state or local government; or federally recognized tribal communities or tribes may apply.

Eligible applicants must:

- Have received a New Mexico Arts award in FY2025. Have previously submitted complete Final Invoices and Reports by the required receipt deadline(s) for all New Mexico Arts grant(s)

- Be limited to one application per organization/institution.
- Comply with state and federal legal requirements including nonprofit, tax-exempt status at the time of application. (All organizations must apply directly on their own behalf. Applications through a fiscal agent are not allowed.)
- If applying for other New Mexico Arts funding opportunities, ensure that the applications do not have any overlap of costs during the same period.
- Have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). All organizations who apply to New Mexico Arts are required to have a Unique Entity ID (UEI) from [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) in alignment with requirements from the National Endowment for the Arts.
- An eligible organization must have a minimum of one planning partner including, but not limited to, nonprofits, local arts agencies, arts service organizations, units of state or local government, federally recognized tribal communities or tribes.

Planning Project Budget

New Mexico Arts funding is limited to any or all of the following:

- Personnel support, full or partial, for one or more staff positions for planning activities
- Contracted Fees & Services for artists and/or contractual personnel to support the services they provide for specific activities as part of the planning process
- Travel
- Marketing & Public Relations
- Rent: Planning & Meeting Spaces
- Supplies: Planning/Meeting related
- Other (phone, postage, etc.)

Funding Restrictions

Funding from New Mexico Arts cannot be used for the following:

- Direct grants to individuals
- Any events or activities already listed as part of another organization's application
- Projects or organizations outside of the State of New Mexico
- Investment or contingency funding (i.e., accounts earning interest)
- Direct aid to individuals, including fellowships, scholarships, cash prizes, or awards
- Projects that have already occurred
- Projects in which school, college, or university course credit is the primary purpose
- Projects whose main purpose is recreational
- Projects whose primary purpose is the re-staging of historical events
- Cost of parties, receptions, fund-raising events, and other social functions
- Grant writing, solicitation of gifts/services, and donor appreciation programs
- Any food except when food is part of a per diem
- Deficit reduction

- Negotiated indirect costs
 - Projects in which commissions/acquisitions of permanent works of visual art are the primary purpose
 - Permanent acquisitions (i.e., buildings or land)
 - Capital improvements, new construction, renovation, or conservation
 - Capital supplies & equipment such as copy machines, musical instruments, electronic equipment, computers, etc.
 - Requests that fund other divisions, foundations, or employees and contractors of the Department of Cultural Affairs or members of the New Mexico Arts Commission
 - Rent or fees for facilities owned by the NM Department of Cultural Affairs
-

How to Apply

1. Review Arts & Health Initiative Collaborative Planning Grant guidelines
2. Contact Arts & Health Initiative coordinator with questions
3. Download Collaborative Planning Grant Application from New Mexico Arts Website*
4. Attend or review online Grant Info + Q&A presentation (recording available TBA)
5. Submit completed application via email by October 31, 2025, 5 pm MST

*Collaborative Planning Grant Application is available for download at the New Mexico Arts website here: <https://nmarts.org/all-programs/arts-health/>

For accessibility questions or to request an alternate format of these guidelines and associated documents, contact New Mexico Arts at 505-827-6490 or Amy.Mills@dca.nm.gov

Selection Criteria

The following criteria are considered during the review of applications

- Artistic Work of the Organization (Artistic Quality)
- Alignment/Relevance to Organization's Mission and Programming
- Potential for Collaborative Engagement
- Administrative Ability & Capacity

Key Dates

Deadline: October 31, 2025, 5PM, MST

Award Notification: December 1, 2025

Grant Period: Jan 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026.

Please contact Kevin Lenkner, Arts & Health Initiative Coordinator, for questions about the Arts & Health Initiative at 505 412-5791 or kevin.lenkner@dca.nm.gov

Award Information

Applicants may request a fixed grant amount of \$5,000. Matching funds are not required. The New Mexico Arts grant support may start no earlier than Jan 1, 2026.

New Mexico Arts funding is on a reimbursement basis. Costs that are included in your FY26 Arts & Health Collaborative Planning Grant proposal must be incurred during the grant period.

Award Administration

Grant Agreement Term

The Arts & Health Grants are being offered through support from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). We are required to provide applicants with requirements imposed by federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions that flow down to the grantee. Please see [NEA General Terms and Conditions](#) for Partnership Agreement Awards.

In consideration of NEA's terms and conditions, please ensure that any proposed programs are in line with these requirements.

Crediting Requirement

Grantees must clearly acknowledge support from New Mexico Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts in their programs and related promotional material including publications and websites. Additional acknowledgment requirements may be provided later.

Administrative Requirements

In addition to the requirements described above, grantees will be required to report to New Mexico Arts on funding received through the program. See "Project Reporting" below.

Grantees will be required to:

- Sign a grant agreement and submit required supporting grant agreement documents
- Submit required [Collaborative Community Plan](#) document and data to New Mexico Arts
- Participate in peer-to-peer learning and capacity building workshops

Accessibility

Federal regulations require that all New Mexico Arts and federally funded projects are accessible to people with disabilities. Funded activities must be held in a physically accessible venue and program access and effective communication must be provided for participants and audience members with disabilities.

New Mexico Arts encourages applicants to consider accessibility in the broadest terms. Any organization or individual contracting with New Mexico Arts is required to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As stated in the law,

contractors must make “reasonable accommodations” that are “readily achievable” to ensure that all programs, services, and facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities. In-person and virtual events should also be accessible to the public through provision of adequate notice of the event, proper scheduling to allow for the greatest number of attendees, adequate parking and signage, ticket price, closed captioning, and ease of use of appropriate technology.

If your application is recommended for funding, you may be asked to provide detailed information describing how you will make your project physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities.

Project Reporting

Organizations will be required to report on activities funded by the Arts & Health Initiative. The reporting requirements include a written project plan and grant funded activity data. All required reporting and data must be submitted by June 30, 2026.