

ANNUAL FINAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022

For Region 6E, 6W, and 8

Submitted to
Minnesota State Arts Board
as
fiscal agent
for

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA ARTS COUNCIL

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Michele Knife Sterner, Vice President

Jessica Welu, Treasurer & President-Elect

Anna Johannsen, Board Member at Large to Executive Committee

Caroline Koska, Secretary

Nicole DeBoer, Executive Director

Attachments

SMAC FY22 Grant & Services Information.pdf

SMAC FY22 Highlights.pdf

SMAC FY22 Grants Awarded.pdf

SMAC FY22 Financials.xlsx (Unaudited Income & Expense Report* on Regional Arts Council Template)

**An audited 2022 financial report, with a breakdown of spending by program, will be submitted by*

December 31, 2022



SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA ARTS COUNCIL

Regions 6E, 6W & 8

REPORT ON FISCAL YEAR 2022

The goals and objectives included in our biennial plan have been addressed during fiscal year 2022. See the attached report showing all FY2022 grantees, including project descriptions and funding sources, as well as the “FY2022 Highlights” document for further detail and additional examples of how we have met our goals and objectives.

Priority Goals and related accomplishments

PRIORITY 1: GRANT PROGRAMS - Provide effective and efficient grant programs for the production or sponsorship of art for individual artists, non-profit organizations, units of government including tribal government, communities, schools, and youth

In Fiscal Year 2022 we awarded a total of \$608,191 in grants to 125 area organizations and artists under 14 separate programs. This is an increase of 12.5% in grants funded over FY21.

One of the reasons for the increase in grants funded was the commitment of the SMAC Board of Directors in creating two new programs – one for organizations and one for artists – that allow for a quick turnaround. Titled “Quick Support” these programs offer a one-month turnaround on panel evaluation and board review so that organizations and individual artists can take advantage of opportunities in a more flexible fashion. The creation of these programs was due to response from our constituents on barriers in our grant systems.

SMAC announced the guidelines for grant categories at least six weeks in advance of the deadline. Grants were posted on our website, announcements sent out via press releases, email, notices on our website and social media channels. SMAC staff provided grant workshops, plus one-on-one assistance over the phone, via email and in-person. In addition, we provided one dedicated day each month to walk-in assistance with no advance notice required. SMAC maintained a toll-free phone number and easy access via email, as well as through our website. Grant programs are also advertised in our monthly digital newsletter. Constituents needing help with the on-line application process were assisted by SMAC staff, SMAC board members and local arts organization staff and volunteers. In FY22 we contracted with three people to fill the role of “Arts Ambassadors” and those people provided outreach

to artists and communities we don't regularly engage with – which resulted in bringing new applicants and fresh projects to our grant programs.

In the past SMAC used only McKnight dollars to fund adult artist grants through two programs (Emerging Artist, and Established Career Artist) which allowed them to grow in their skills, visibility and artistic career. FY22 saw the second year of a new grant program titled Artist Equity, which focuses on funding BIPOC artists and uses ACH funds to do so. Our individual artists, who's practice involved secluded work time during the pandemic, found great support in our artist grant funding.

Since the start of the pandemic we have offered grant panels and monthly board meetings virtually. Because of this commitment, in FY22 we have realized relationships and engagement from people new to SMAC and especially those representing or a part of BIPOC and traditionally underserved communities. Our panels are fully offered in the virtual platform of ZOOM, while our Board meetings are offered as a hybrid option (in-person or virtual connection).

PRIORITY 2: STRONG ORGANIZATION: Maintain a strong and highly functional board of directors and staff utilizing their capacity to strengthen arts organizations and artists while acting as responsible stewards of public and private funds in service of the arts.

The SMAC Board consists of at least one representative (in some cases co-representatives) from each of the counties in our service region. In addition to attendance at board meetings, our board members participate through committee work and service on grant review panels. Standing committees include Long Range Planning, Marketing & Fundraising, Nominating, Equity, Annual Celebration Planning, Grant Program, Audit and Artist Retreat Planning committees. Committee activities are reported at each board meeting. SMAC held a board strategic planning retreat in January 2022 where the focus was a review of our organizational foundation through our bylaws and articles of incorporation and our strategic plan going forward 3-5 years. In addition, with the leadership and knowledge of Cheyenne StJohn, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of Cansayapi Oyate (Lower Sioux Indian Community), we dug into the history and impacts of the 1862 Dakota Uprising on our region as the geographic center of this conflict. Board members use this training to inform their work at SMAC as well as to share with constituents in their counties.

SMAC board and staff, with the assistance of grant review panelists and input from grant applicants, continually work to make our grant programs accessible and effective. Grants are tracked through our database and our online grant system. A sub-committee of the SMAC Board (the Grants Committee) spends time reviewing and making recommendations to the SMAC Board for changes that will strengthen our grant programs – or simply make them easier to understand for our applicants. A separate sub-committee of the SMAC Board (the Equity Committee) looks at our systems and processes to find ways to reduce barriers for all constituents to engage in the arts, especially historically marginalized communities in our region.

SMAC has continued to refine rubrics to assist grant panelists in their evaluation of grant applications. Panelists are trained to apply the criteria consistently as they review grants. Grant panelists are

appointed by the SMAC board and represent a broad range of backgrounds, geography and expertise in artistic disciplines.

Priority 3: EQUITY AND DIVERSITY - Actively and with concentrated efforts connect with all constituents and work to define and address barriers and issues of arts access.

SMAC has been immersed concentrated work for the past five years by reviewing our processes & systems with a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion.

- Staff and board have been involved in intercultural development inventory (IDI) counseling
- Our Equity Committee – made up of 6 board members – was created to take stock of where we were at and then create goals for FY22 and beyond and inform the board’s decisions using an IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity & accessibility) lens.
- Accessibility in both our physical and virtual offerings was a priority in FY22; as well as educating our constituents.

The Artist Equity grant program, whose intent is to aid Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other artists of color with projects that will advance their skills and artistic careers, continued to reach new artists in its second year of existence. SMAC funded 12 BIPOC artists living and creating in our region in FY22. SW MN Arts Council acknowledges that systems currently in place have historically marginalized and underserved indigenous people of the Americas and communities of color. We are committed to closing access gaps in the arts, breaking down barriers, and building bridges across communities. It is vital that we support artists in writing their own narratives, and we hope to do so by providing dedicated resources and recognition to artists of color in our region. In addition to the creation of this new grant program that was launched in FY21, SMAC instituted a system of “priority scoring” for applicants across grant programs for BOTH organizations and for individual artists. In continuing efforts to address equity and remove systematic barriers to the arts, our board set priorities where eligible grant applications will receive bonus points in the scoring process. Bonus points are given for being a first time applicant, underserved applicant (BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, and people living with a disability) and those applicants from counties in our SW MN region suffering from art scarcity.

In our focus on accessibility this fiscal year we contracted with Scott Artley with the goals of providing:

- A completed ADA Access Plan (in accessible PDF and editable Word formats);
- A website Accessibility Conformance Report;
- Physical audit documentation;
- A brief report summarizing the project and providing guidance on implementing and updating future plans;
- A curated selection of accessibility checklists/resources relevant to SMAC’s work.

All of these objectives were realized and we continued our engagement with this consultant to provide a series of two educational workshops on the topic of Accessibility for arts organizations and the arts-interested public.

With a move to a new building late in FY22, we have all new accessibility issues that will be addressed over time, however the knowledge received earlier in the year allowed us to identify those issues as we made the commitment to transition office space.

Priority 4: PROMOTION OF THE ARTS - Promote, celebrate and advocate on behalf of arts creators, providers, and appreciators in SW MN.

SMAC publicizes regional arts activities via our monthly digital newsletter, robust website that includes a detailed regional calendar and regular email, as well as with social media messaging and posters throughout the communities involved. Our marketing coordinator posts on social media multiple times each day and has collected an impressive following by sharing arts activities & opportunities across the region and even statewide – whether funded by SMAC or not. SMAC staff and board members attend events throughout the region and advocate for the arts in communities and schools. SMAC encourages board, staff and constituents to attend Arts Advocacy Day to communicate with their legislators about the importance of the arts in their districts.

SMAC's executive director is an active member of the Forum of Regional Arts Councils of Minnesota (FRACM). The FRACM conducts best practices sessions prior to business meetings. They conduct peer reviews of biennial plan proposals and provide input on grant programs and other services. The executive directors of the Minnesota Citizens for the Arts and the Minnesota State Arts Board and the arts program director for the McKnight Foundation are regularly invited to FRACM board meetings. Other arts organization and foundation representatives are invited to make presentations at FRACM board meetings. Surveys seeking input are conducted with participants in FRACM programs. In addition, the SMAC executive director serves on the MN Citizens for the Arts Board and is active in promoting the arts legislatively.

The SMAC Art Gallery provided 6 regional artists (all SMAC grantees) the opportunity to have a solo exhibit in an accessible space. Receptions and artist talks were held honoring each artist. In FY2022 all of those exhibiting artists had the opportunity to participate in virtual receptions featuring their work. These virtual receptions and accessible digital exhibit tours have created far more visitors and exposure than expected. Future plans for gallery exhibits will always include a virtual component.

In September 2021, SMAC's Annual Arts Celebration was once again offered in-person. Hosted outdoors at Fort Belmont in Jackson, a county we had not celebrated in since the 1970's, we held time for the traditional, required meeting elements and also offered a drum circle experience. Participants celebrated Rosemary Glesener, the 2021 SMAC Prairie Disciple.

We have continued to increase the use of social media (via Facebook and Instagram) and email communications through Constant Contact to disseminate information regarding grant deadlines, events, workshops and arts opportunities in our region but also throughout the state. Press releases continue to be effective ways to encourage newspaper articles in regional print media. Thanks to "Google Alerts" we are able to track news articles about SMAC activities. We regularly make personal contact with constituents at arts events throughout the region.

Priority 5: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/CAPACITY BUILDING - Develop artists' and arts providers' capacity to succeed.

Staff treats every interaction whether direct or indirect with the intention of developing artists and organizations capacity to succeed.

SMAC hosts online webinars and grant workshops prior to each grant round and when possible or via virtual means meets one-on-one with individuals, organizations or government entities who are interested in or have questions about our grant programs. Grant staff is quick to set up a Zoom meeting as well as being available to travel to the inquiring community if the need is great, or if multiple people want to learn more about our programs.

SMAC was pleased to return to hosting our annual Artist Retreat in May 2022. Over the course of two days, over 50 artists of all levels & abilities took part in 12 technical and inspirational learning sessions on the Danebod Folk School site in Tyler, MN. The retreat like atmosphere encourages attendees to try new mediums and broaden their appreciation of art... and of each other.

Online grantwriting webinars were conducted regularly. Videos of the webinars are recorded and provided online for viewing after the live event.

The SMAC website www.swmnarts.org provided information on available grants, news and arts opportunities, on-line grant forms, recorded webinars, calendar of arts events (including virtual), and links to arts resources.

Overall Goals for SMAC Programs:

- Support artists and arts organizations in creating, producing and presenting high-quality arts activities
- Overcome barriers to accessing high quality arts activities
- Instill the arts into the community and public life in our region
- Support high quality age appropriate arts education for residents of all ages to develop knowledge, skills, and understanding of the arts
- Support events and activities that represent the diverse ethnic and cultural arts traditions including folk and traditional artists and arts organizations represented in this region.

Target Population

- Arts Organizations
- Cities
- Counties
- Tribal nations
- Schools
- Other nonprofit organizations
- Individual Artists

- All Residents of the 18 counties of our service region in southwest Minnesota

Program Outcomes

- Artists and arts organizations have increased their capacity to create, present & produce high-quality arts activities
- Residents of southwest Minnesota have increased access to quality arts activities
- Residents of southwest Minnesota have access to arts learning opportunities
- Residents of southwest Minnesota have access to activities that represent the diverse ethnic and cultural arts traditions represented in this region

Measurement Tools

- SMAC Database – number of applicants, number of grantees, types of projects, geographic distribution of funds, number of successful first time applicants
- Grantee final reports – project evaluation results, number of audience members, participants and artists
- Site evaluations – quality of projects and events
- Number of attendees at SMAC sponsored events and art gallery exhibit
- Surveys of grantees, participants and constituents
- Information gathered by other means from grantees, participants, grant panelists, audience members, arts-interested public

Monitoring & Evaluation of Grants

All grant recipients are required to submit a final report within 60 days of their project completion. The final report includes financial information and number of people served as well as narrative response to specific questions about the project and examples of how the project was advertised and promoted. Twenty percent of the grant award is withheld until the final report has been received and approved. Every effort is made to evaluate projects on site by board members, panelists and staff. The SMAC board is provided with a summary of information received from the final reports

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA ARTS COUNCIL

Fiscal Year 2022 Board of Directors Affiliations

Judy Beckman, Ortonville (Big Stone County): vocal musician – Sweet Adelines and competitive chorus, tourism director, writer; involved with Big Stone Arts Council. Elected 11/21

Georgette Jones, Watson (Chippewa County): Secondary English Teacher, Speech Coach, Middle School Play Director, HS Fall Play Director, Community Education Theatre Coordinator, actor/director Marshall Area Stage Company, board of directors, actor, director Lac qui Parle Players, Madison. Appointed 1/16

Anna Johanssen, Windom (Cottonwood County): former alternative learning center art teacher for K-12; fiber artist; attends and supports the visual arts, music, theatre; Remick Gallery board of directors. Appointed 1/19

Gillian Singler, Lakefield (Jackson County): chair of Humanities at MN West Community & Technical College, English instructor, writer/publisher/poet. Elected 2/22

Cheri Buzzeo, Spicer (Kandiyohi County): Production Coordinator at the Willmar Community Theatre/The Barn Theatre and is an arts advocate and supporter. Elected 9/19

Kristine Shelstad, Madison (Lac qui Parle County): Director of Madison Merchantile (arts gallery and performance space), board member of Rotary Clubs, Veteran Service Organizations, Junior Vice Commander of VFW Post 1656, Retired Army Lieutenant Colonel. Elected 11/21

Mark Wilmes, Tyler (Lincoln County): former President & Artistic Director of the Lake Benton Opera House Board, managing editor for the Tyler, Lake Benton and Hendricks newspapers, musician and actor. Elected 1/20

Michele Knife Sterner, Marshall (Lyon County): Visual artist and involved with the Marshall Area Stage Company; experienced in traditional American Indian style dancing; works with the “Access, Opportunity, and Success” program at Southwest Minnesota State University. Elected 11/16

Justin Beck, Hutchinson (McLeod County): photographer, board president of Hutchinson Center for the Arts, Hutchinson Public Arts Commission member. Elected 3/22

Darlene Kotelnicki, Litchfield (Meeker County): theatre enthusiast, volunteer and supporter, former board member of Greater Litchfield Opera House. Appointed 8/20

Jessica Welu, Slayton (Murray County): communications director at Southern Regional Development Corp., writer/poet, planning member of Slayton mural project. Elected 1/21

Cheryl Avenel-Navara, Worthington (Nobles County): arts enthusiast; educator with advanced training for underserved and minority students; several years of experience with minority groups including disabled and new immigrants. Elected 1/21

Erica Volkir, Pipestone (Pipestone County): Former president of Fairmont Opera House, current Vice-President and Board Member of Pipestone Performing Arts Center, Executive Director of the Pipestone Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB, actress, dancer. Elected 9/17

David Kelsey Bassett, Lamberton (Redwood County - present): Visual artist – screenprint artist, musician/performing artist, writer, dance instructor. Elected 8/17

Kylie Rieke, Fairfax (Renville County): Visual artist – pottery, small business owner, theatre actor & director. Elected 8/22

Shawn Kingsinger, Luverne (Rock County): Executive Director for the Palace Theatre in Luverne, Vice President of Green Earth Players Community Theatre, a board member of Luverne Street Music and Artistic Director for the Luverne High School Theater. Elected 2/20

(Swift County – currently OPEN)

(Yellow Medicine County – currently OPEN)

SMAC STAFF

Executive Director – Nicole Johnson-DeBoer

April 2010 to present. Visual artist; vocalist; graphic design & marketing freelancer for multiple businesses, organizations and festivals; FORUM Executive Committee member; University of MN Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships 'Resilient Communities' member; MN Citizens for the Arts board member; former Creative Director for The Schwan Food Company; previous Artist Career Counselor for Springboard for the Arts; former president and secretary, Lyon County Historical Society; high school Booster Club(s) member; grant review panelist for SW MN United Way.

Financial/Grants Administrator –Caroline Koska

June 2011 to present. Former vocalist in Prairie Arts Chorale; performer in Marshall Area Stage Company's musical theatre productions; Lake Benton Opera House theatre productions; pianist & flutist and piano teacher; former coordinator, Marshall Area Fine Arts Council, former board of directors Lyon County Historical Society.

Marketing & Accessibility Coordinator – Krystl Louwagie

August 2016 to present. Visual artist; Hamline University graduate with a degree in Studio Art and Art History; professional face painter.