

SOUTH DAKOTA ARTS COUNCIL

ARTIST GRANT GUIDANCE SHEET

(Career Development, Collaboration, and Fellowship)

Program Purpose

The South Dakota Arts Council's Artist Grant program supports artists in all stages of their careers who demonstrate artistic excellence and artistic merit. These grants invest in South Dakota artists' creative development, collaboration, and long-term contributions to the state's arts community.

Artists may apply in one of three paths:

- Artist Career Development Grant – for artists building or advancing their careers.
- Artist Collaboration Grant – for artists working together on a shared project.
- Artist Fellowship – for established artists with a record of sustained achievement.

Program Goals

- Strengthen South Dakota's creative ecosystem by supporting individual artists.
- Encourage artistic growth, experimentation, and collaboration.
- Recognize artistic excellence and sustained contributions to the arts in South Dakota.
- Increase the visibility of South Dakota artists regionally and nationally.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be a current South Dakota resident and have lived in the state for at least one year prior to the application deadline.
- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Not be enrolled as a full-time student at the time of application.
- Apply as an individual artist (not an organization).
- Submit original work samples that represent their artistic practice.

Artists may apply for only one artist grant category per fiscal year.

Funding & Grant Categories

Grant Type	Purpose	Award Amount
Career Development	Supports artistic growth and career advancement.	\$2,000
Collaboration	Supports two or more artists working jointly on a defined project.	\$6,000

Fellowship	Recognizes sustained artistic excellence and achievement.	\$5,000
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Funding amounts are subject to availability and annual appropriation by the South Dakota Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Review Criteria

Panelists review and score applications based on two equally weighted criteria:

1. Artistic Merit (50%) – Assesses the artist’s identity, purpose, and commitment to their practice, as well as the potential impact of their work on the community or arts field.
2. Artistic Excellence (50%) – Assesses the artist’s ability, skill, and quality of work as demonstrated in the work samples, résumé, and career record.

Each category’s rubric provides specific guidance to panelists. Applicants are encouraged to review these rubrics when preparing materials.

Required Application Components

All applicants must submit:

1. Completed Application Form (including all narrative responses)
2. Artist Bio and Statement
3. Proposal Narrative (based on the selected grant type)
4. Work Samples and Work Sample List
5. Résumé or CV (Required)
 - 1–2 pages summarizing artistic training, exhibitions, performances, publications, or other professional experiences.
 - A sample résumé template is available on the SDAC website.

Work Sample Guidelines

Choose examples that best represent your artistic quality and stage of development.

Acceptable formats include:

- Visual arts: 5–10 images
- Music / Performance / Dance: Up to 5 audio or video files (10 minutes total)
- Literary arts: Up to 10 pages of writing samples
- Film / Media arts: Up to 10 minutes of combined clips

Each file should be clearly labeled with the applicant’s name and title of the work. A corresponding Work Sample List must include:

- Title
- Medium or format
- Date of creation
- Brief description or context (1–2 sentences)

Panel Process

Applications are reviewed by a panel of arts professionals familiar with a range of disciplines. Panelists independently score applications, then meet to discuss and rank proposals according to artistic merit and artistic excellence. Recommendations are submitted to the South Dakota Arts Council for final funding decisions.

Grant Period

Artist grants typically support activities occurring July 1 – June 30 of the following fiscal year. All funded activities must be completed, and final reports submitted, by June 30.

Tips for Applicants

- Write in clear, direct language; avoid jargon.
- Use your narrative to connect your ideas, goals, and artistic identity.
- Choose strong, recent work samples that demonstrate your current practice.
- Label all files and uploads consistently.
- Review the scoring rubric to understand what panelists are looking for.

Contact

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