

# National Endowment for the Arts

## Notice of Funding Opportunity: FY26 Partnership Agreement Grants

### Grant Program Details: Regional Arts Organizations

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**Access for individuals with disabilities:**

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Contact [accessibility@arts.gov](mailto:accessibility@arts.gov) to request an accommodation or an alternate format of the guidelines at least 2 weeks before the application deadline.

# Partnership Agreement Grants: Regional Arts Organizations (RAOs)

## Basic Information

<b>Federal Agency Name</b>	National Endowment for the Arts
<b>Funding Opportunity Title</b>	Partnership Agreement Grants
<b>Announcement Type</b>	Modification of previous announcement
<b>Funding Opportunity Number(s)</b>	2026NEA04PA
<b>Assistance Listing Number(s)</b>	45.025
<b>Agency Contact Information</b>	<a href="#">Contacts Page</a>

<b>FUNDING DETAILS</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b> <i>(Contingent on availability of funds)</i>
<b>Total amount of funding expected to award</b>	\$11,000,000
<b>Anticipated number of awards</b>	6
<b>Expected dollar value of awards (range)</b>	\$1,400,000 - \$2,400,000

## Executive Summary

The National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) State & Regional Partnership Agreement grants are awarded to the nation's [56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies](#) (SAAs), and the [six regional arts organizations](#) (RAOs) with geographically-defined SAA memberships.

Partnership Agreement grant support enables RAOs to respond to the needs identified through public planning undertaken with their constituents, partners, and stakeholders. This investment in locally-determined priorities extends federal reach and impact, translating national leadership into local benefit.

Eligibility for RAO Partnership Agreement grants are limited to the six U.S. Regional Arts Organizations.

### COMPONENTS OF THIS NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO):

- **GRANT PROGRAM DETAILS (this document):** Information about the grant program, including a grant program description, eligibility, review criteria, award amount and cost sharing, and post-award requirements and administration, among others.
- **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS DOCUMENT:** Navigate to the "Application Instructions" section on the Partnership Agreements webpage for complete information on application requirements and how to complete and submit your application.

**KEY DATES:**

Step	Date
Grant Program Details and Application Instructions Published	August 2025
Application Package Available on Grants.gov	August 2025
<b>Submit Application to Grants.gov</b>	<b>September 25, 2025 11:59 pm ET</b>
Notification of recommended funding or rejection	April 2026
Submit Partnership Agreements Budget Form	Date Announced in Notification of Funding
Earliest Start Date for Proposed Project	July 1, 2026

## Regional Arts Agencies Program Description

The regional arts organizations (RAOs) are private, nonprofit entities created by state arts leaders in the mid-1970s to facilitate the exchange of artists across state borders. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) encouraged the development of RAOs to cultivate the touring of artists to sparsely populated and underserved areas of the country.

Over time, RAOs have evolved to play a major role in strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the U.S. arts infrastructure. They draw on their own ability to cultivate public and private resources; work collaboratively across state, national, and international borders; and deliver programming across all arts disciplines.

RAOs play a leading role with federal agencies, funders, and those working at the state and community levels to design, implement, and channel resources into programs and services that meet the needs of the public they serve. While they operate independently, RAOs collaborate with each other, their member states, and constituency groups in a national network, to assist the NEA and other funders in delivering programs.

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### Program Goals & Objectives

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Federal investment in this area is based on each RAO's execution of a responsive planning process in response to constituents' needs. Regional Partnership Agreement grants support region-identified goals and activities consistent with the RAO's regional arts plan. RAOs are encouraged to review [NEA agency priorities](#) as part of their own strategic planning processes. Additionally, the RAOs may also receive funding to support shared goals and objectives in the areas of accessibility, folk & traditional arts, and artist-centered engagement.

Funding for these program components is included in the Partnership Agreement award total, with a required cost share-match.

### Regional Engagement Program

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The Regional Engagement Program (REP) recognizes a contemporary evolution of regional arts organizations' service to the field, through their support for artist-centered engagement, with an emphasis on programs that reach underserved groups/communities and enhance public engagement with the arts. For the purposes of these guidelines, an underserved group/community includes populations whose opportunities to experience the arts have been limited relative to factors such as geography, economic status, ethnicity, or disability. Within this broad definition, RAOs are asked to specify their own underserved constituencies.

Support is available for regional programs that:

- Increase access to the arts in underserved groups/communities
- Enhance public engagement with the arts

- Are based on planning with stakeholders including, but not limited to: artists, arts ensembles, arts organizations, and/or other partners such as state arts agencies, local arts agencies, and other community groups.
- Examples of such programs include, but are not limited to, touring and presentation, artist residencies, educational programming, professional development, artist professional network and cohort development, and/or the creation of new work by artists.

Please note the following:

- Programs must be compliant with the [NEA General Terms and Conditions for Partnership Agreement grants](#).
- Selection processes must base decisions on criteria that includes artistic excellence and artistic merit.
- Programming must be accessible to, and engage with, individuals and artists of all abilities, including in-person or virtual elements in compliance with federal law.
- We recommend that no more than 20 percent of the NEA Regional Engagement funds be used to support an RAO's administrative costs. RAOs should determine the number and size of grants for their program, informed by regional planning, community conversations, and programmatic/service history.

### **Folk and Traditional Arts Partnership**

The NEA ensures traditional artists and culture-bearers have the opportunity to pass on cultural knowledge of their art forms. To support this goal, Folk and Traditional Arts Partnerships funding is intended to strengthen living cultural traditions in every state, jurisdiction, or region and bolster the folk and traditional arts. The NEA envisions stable, outreach-driven programs that are responsive to a region's folk and traditional arts heritage. Regions are encouraged to support professional, paid positions in the folk and traditional arts. Possible components of a region's folk and traditional arts program might include, but are not limited to, fieldwork to identify and document underserved folk & traditional artists; apprenticeships, mentorships, or folk arts in education programs; and statewide activities that increase public awareness of living cultural heritage.

### **Accessibility**

Funding may be available for Regional Arts Organizations to support professional development (for staff members of Regional Arts Organizations and member State Arts Agencies) and subawards related to accessibility requirements for cultural organizations and engagement with the disability community.

Funding is included in Partnership Agreement grants. Accessibility-specific funding is available in amounts of up to \$15,000 for FY26.

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## National Endowment for the Arts, Regional, and State Partnership

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The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the RAOs, and the SAAs comprise a national network of arts funders, cultural program and service providers, and leaders in the arts and culture sector. We believe that each participating entity benefits from partnership in the network. We invest in the network through State and Regional Partnership Agreement grants in order to:

- Strengthen the cultural infrastructure of the United States,
- Facilitate the creation and presentation of artistic works,
- Provide the public with lifelong learning opportunities in the arts,
- Enhance public engagement with, and access to, the arts,
- Foster greater cultural understanding, and
- Contribute to the enrichment of lives and communities throughout the nation.

We acknowledge that SAAs may choose to participate in the work of an RAO of which it is not a member. SAAs may choose to shift membership from one RAO to another, or may choose to withhold membership in an RAO. While recognizing that the ecology of the network benefits from change, we also believe that the network benefits from stability. To this end, shifts in state membership in RAOs must be preceded by at least one full year of planning by all of the agencies involved, including the NEA.

## Eligibility Requirements for Regional Arts Organizations

In order to enter into a Partnership Agreement grant with the NEA, a regional arts organization must:

- Be comprised of at least three state arts agency (SAA) members.
- Meet the NEA's [Legal Requirements](#) at the time of application.

### SAM Registration

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All applicants must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), be registered with the [System for Award Management](#) (SAM), and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete, and should a grant be made, throughout the life of the award.

### Planning Process

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The regional arts organization must have developed a regional arts plan that:

- Results from a comprehensive and responsive planning process that engages SAAs and other constituents.
- Reflects recommendations from the public process, as well as programmatic and/or policy responses to the recommendations.

The regional arts organization submits this plan with its Partnership Agreement grant application.

### Regional arts organizations that subaward must:

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- Require their subrecipients to provide a UEI before a grant can be made.
- Report awards of \$30,000 or more in federal funds and, if required, information about the compensation of executives related to those grants to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System (FSRS).
- Base program funding decisions on criteria that includes artistic excellence and artistic merit.
- Ensure that all subawards made with Federal or cost share funds are in compliance with the General Terms and Conditions for the NEA award, including requirements for pass-through entities as provided under 2 CFR 200.331.

Subgranting to individuals is not allowed, with the exception of support for folk arts and professional development activities.

For full requirements for subawards, see [Appendix A of the Partnership Agreements General Terms and Conditions](#).



## Award Amounts & Cost Share

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### Partnership Award Amounts

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Funding is available to support region-identified goals and activities. Additionally, awards may include funds for shared programmatic goals and objectives, to support Folk and Traditional Arts, Accessibility, and artist-centered engagement through the Regional Engagement Program.

Partnership award amounts are determined through a formulaic process that includes consideration of NEA allocations and available funds, previous award levels, current RAO program offerings, and the region's population figures.

### Cost Share Funds

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All awards require a cost share of at least 1 to 1.

All costs included in your Project Budget, whether supported by NEA funds or cost share funds, must be expended during your period of performance, including all costs associated with subaward activity.

### Period of Performance

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Awards will support activities that are scheduled to begin on July 1, 2026, or any time thereafter.

## Application Contents & Format

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### Application Instructions

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A document containing detailed instructions on how to prepare and submit your application can be found on the [Partnership Agreement Grants](#) page, under “Grant Program Details and Instructions”.

**Reminder: RAO Applicants are no longer designated as on-year or off-year, *ALL RAO applicants must submit a full application each year.***

### Submit Application via Grants.gov

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Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov, the federal government’s online application system. **The Grants.gov system must receive your validated application no later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on September 25, 2025.**

We suggest that you submit your application **at least 10 days prior to the deadline** to give yourself ample time to resolve any problems that you might encounter. You take significant risk by waiting until the day of the deadline to submit your application. Late applications will not be accepted.

To begin the submission process, access the Grant Opportunity Package on the [Partnership Agreements Grants](#) page, under the “How to Apply” heading.

### Applications Recommended for Funding

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Following the notification of funding offers (anticipated to be April 2026), all applicants must complete and submit a Partnership Agreement grant budget for NEA review. Instructions and deadlines will be provided with the notification of funding.

## Submission Requirements & Deadlines

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### Pre-Application Required Registration

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Before applying, all applicants must register with [Login.gov](#), [Grants.gov](#), and the System for Award Management (SAM) at [SAM.gov](#). Applicants must provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in their application; and continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current entity information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal agency. **All three required registrations must be active to submit the application through Grants.gov.**

Returning applicants must renew or verify that their registrations are up to date prior to the application deadline.

**Registering and maintaining accounts with Login.gov, SAM, and Grants.gov is always FREE.**

The **Registration Guidance document** available on the Partnership Agreements webpage provides detailed information about the registration process, including links to each registration site, and support resources.

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### Submission Methods

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Application materials must be submitted electronically.

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### Contact Information

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For assistance with application requirements, [contact NEA staff](#).

#### Login.gov, SAM, and Grants.gov Help

The NEA does not have access to your Login.gov, SAM, or Grants.gov accounts. If you have any questions about or need assistance with these sites, including questions regarding electronic accessibility, you must contact them directly:

- **Login.gov Help:** Call 1-844-875-6446, consult the information posted in their [Help Center](#), or use their [online form](#) to submit a question.
- **SAM Federal Service Desk:** Call 1-866-606-8220 or see the information posted on the SAM website at [SAM Help](#).
- **Grants.gov Contact Center:** Call 1-800-518-4726, email [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov), or consult the information posted on the Grants.gov website at [Support](#). The Grants.gov Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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**Application Submission Dates and Times**

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All RAO applicants will submit a full application.

In the event of an emergency (e.g., a hurricane, a SAM.gov or Grants.gov technological failure), the NEA Chair may adjust application deadlines for affected applicants. If a deadline is extended for any reason, an announcement will be posted on our website.

## Application Review

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### Review Criteria

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Review of the application narrative and plan documents addressing:

- The RAO's operating environment, mission, and goals.
- The RAO's planning process, including:
  - the timeline and methodology for constituent engagement through a wide variety of means (such as public meetings, surveys, interviews, virtual engagement, and digital communications, as relevant to various constituent groups); and
  - opportunities for a wide range of constituents to participate in the planning process, including those in underserved groups/communities. For the purposes of these guidelines, an underserved group/community includes populations whose opportunities to experience the arts have been limited relative to factors such as geography, economic status, ethnicity, or disability. Within this broad definition, RAOs are asked to specify their own underserved groups/communities.
- The RAO's responses to the planning process, including:
  - responses to recommendations and priorities identified through the planning process and/or changing circumstances in the region; and
  - processes and metrics used to monitor progress in relation to the regional plan.
- The RAO's programming, including programs and activities reflected in the plan, and as relevant, programs and activities with shared state and federal goals and objectives (Folk and Traditional Arts, Accessibility, and artist-centered engagement through the Regional Engagement Program). Discussion of programming should include details related to:
  - implementation of the arts-related programs and services, and
  - related planning, accomplishments, challenges, and/or opportunities.
- The RAO's cost effectiveness and record of growing and diversifying its revenue sources, specifically from non-federal sources

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### Review Process

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Applications are evaluated according to the Review Criteria.

Funding recommendations are considered by the National Council on the Arts, and are voted on in open session. The Council makes recommendations to the Chair of the NEA. The Chair reviews the Council's recommendations and makes the final decision on all grant awards. Applicants are then notified of funding decisions.

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## Risk Review

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All recommended applications undergo a review to evaluate risk posed by the applicant prior to making a federal award. This may include past performance on grants, ability to meet reporting deadlines, compliance with terms and conditions, audit findings, etc.

## Award Notices

Official grant award notification (i.e., a notice of action authorized by the National Endowment for the Arts' Grants Management Office) is the only legal and valid confirmation of award. This can take several months to issue depending on several factors such as the number of awards to be processed, whether the NEA has its appropriation from Congress, etc. **All NEA awards are contingent on active SAM registration, the NEA will not be able to issue an award if you have an expired SAM.gov registration on September 1 of the fiscal year listed on this funding opportunity.**

## Post Award Requirements & Administration

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### Prohibition on Supplanting Non-Federal Funds

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Partnership Agreement grants must be used to supplement and not supplant non-federal funds. For the purposes of these guidelines, the term "supplant non-federal funds" is defined as using federal dollars to replace non-federal dollars, with the intention or effect of reducing financial support for an SAA or RAO from non-federal funds.

### General Terms & Conditions

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Federal and agency requirements for NEA grants are included in our [General Terms & Conditions](#) (GTC). The GTC incorporates the adoption of 2 CFR Part 200 by reference. The document also explicitly identifies where the NEA has selected options offered in the regulation, such as budget waivers and requirements for use of program income. It also includes requirements for cost share funds, reporting requirements, amendment processes, and termination actions. **Recipients must review, understand, and comply with these requirements.** Failure to comply with the GTCs for an award may result in termination of a grant award, and/or returning funds to the NEA, among other consequences.

### Implementation of Title 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

This guidance from the federal government's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) establishes clarity and consistency of the pre- and post-award requirements applicable to federal financial assistance recipients. Under the authority listed above, the NEA adopts the OMB Guidance in [2 CFR part 200 under §3255.1 Adoption of 2 CFR Part 200](#). This part gives regulatory effect to the OMB guidance and supplements the guidance as needed for the NEA.

### Crediting Requirement

Recipients must clearly acknowledge NEA support in their programs and related promotional material including publications and websites.

Acknowledgments should include the National Endowment for the Arts logo wherever possible. In addition, we will provide detailed crediting language for SAAs and RAOs to use with their own subrecipients.

### Project Reporting and Evaluation

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When a grant is completed, you must submit a final report and answer questions detailing all activities conducted under the State Arts Plan or Regional Arts Plan (SAA/RAO Arts Plan) that was approved as part of your NEA Partnership Agreement grant application and that took place

within the approved period of performance for the award. Before applying, [review the reporting requirements](#).

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## Final Reporting on Previous Awards

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Before a grant is awarded, organizations must have submitted acceptable Final Report packages by the due date(s) for all NEA grant(s) previously received, and report on funded activities in accordance with the National Standard for Arts Information Exchange. Final Reports include the Federal Financial Report, and the Final Descriptive Report.

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## Legal Requirements and Assurance of Compliance

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The [Legal Requirements](#) section on our website provides information about key legal requirements that may apply to an applicant or recipient. It is not an exhaustive list; more details may be found in Appendix A of the [General Terms & Conditions](#).

By signing and submitting the application form on Grants.gov, the Applicant certifies that it is in compliance with the statutes outlined in the [Assurance of Compliance](#) and all related National Endowment for the Arts regulations as well as all applicable executive orders, and that it will maintain records and submit the reports that are necessary to determine its compliance.

**It is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that you are compliant with all legal, regulatory, and policy requirements applicable to your award.**

For more information, review the [Assurance of Compliance FAQ](#).

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## Civil Rights

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The Office of Civil Rights at 202-682-5454 or [civilrights@arts.gov](mailto:civilrights@arts.gov) investigates complaints about compliance with accessibility standards as well as other federal civil rights statutes. For further information and copies of the nondiscrimination regulations identified above, contact the Office of Civil Rights at 202-682-5454 or [civilrights@arts.gov](mailto:civilrights@arts.gov).

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## Regulations Relating to Lobbying

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For organizations applying for more than \$100,000 (31 U.S.C. 1352).

The applicant certifies that:

- a) It has not and will not use federal appropriated funds or cost share funds to pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of a National Endowment for the Arts advisory panel or the National Council on the Arts, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of or modification to any federal grant or contract.



- b) If it has used or will use any funds other than federal appropriated funds to pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence any of the individuals specified above, the applicant:
- i) Is not required to disclose that activity if that person is regularly employed by the applicant. (Regularly employed means working for at least 130 days within the year immediately preceding the submission of this application.)
  - ii) Will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," if that person is not regularly employed by the applicant.
  - iii) Will require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards of more than \$100,000 and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

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### **Paperwork Reduction Act Statement**

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The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at an average of 32 hours per response. This includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. We welcome any suggestions that you might have on improving the Guidelines and making them as easy to use as possible. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: [webmgr@arts.gov](mailto:webmgr@arts.gov), attention: Reporting Burden. Note: Applicants are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number.

ALN No. 45.025

OMB No. 3135-0112 Expires 10/31/25