National Endowment for the Arts

Notice of Funding Opportunity: FY27 Partnership Agreement Grants

Grant Program Guidelines: Regional Arts Organizations

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Access for individuals with disabilities:

Contact 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

Federal Agency Name	National Endowment for the Arts
Funding Opportunity Title	Partnership Agreement Grants
Announcement Type	Modification of previous announcement
Funding Opportunity Number(s)	2027NEA04PA
Assistance Listing Number(s)	45.025
Agency Contact Information	Contacts Page

FUNDING DETAILS	**AMOUNT** *(Contingent on availability of funds)*
Total amount of funding expected to award	$11,000,000
Anticipated number of awards	6
Expected dollar value of awards (range)	$1,400,000-$2,500,000

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 funding enables RAOs to respond to the needs identified through public planning undertaken with their constituents, partners, and stakeholders. RAOs are encouraged to review NEA agency priorities as part of their own strategic planning processes.

Eligibility for RAO Partnership Agreement grants is limited to the six U.S. RAOs. All RAOs must apply annually for this funding opportunity.

COMPONENTS OF THIS NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO):

- ***GRANT PROGRAM Guidelines (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	June 2026
Application Package Available on Grants.gov	June 2026
Submit Application to Grants.gov	**September 29, 2026, 11:59 pm ET**
Anticipated notification of recommended funding or rejection	April 2027
Earliest Start Date for Proposed Project	July 1, 2027

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, member states, and constituency groups in a national network, to assist the NEA and other funders in delivering programs.

Program Goals & Objectives

Regional Partnership Agreement grants support region-identified goals and activities consistent with an RAO's regional arts plan. RAOs are encouraged to review NEA agency priorities as part of their own strategic planning processes.

Funds are awarded as described under Award Amounts & Cost Share. RAOs may receive additional funding to advance specific regional and federal goals and objectives.

In FY27, these goals and objectives include supporting artist-centered engagement under the Regional Engagement Program, folk and traditional arts, and accessibility. Funding for these priorities is incorporated into the total Partnership Agreement award, and requires a cost share.

Regional Engagement Program

The Regional Engagement Program (REP) supports RAOs' artist-centered engagement efforts, 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, economics, ethnicity, or disability. Within this broad definition, RAOs are asked to specify their own underserved constituencies.

REP Funding 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 projects, artist residencies, educational programming, professional development programs, artist professional network and cohort development, and/or the creation of new work by artists.

Please note the following:

- Programming must comply with the NEA General Terms and Conditions for Partnership Agreement grants.
- Selection processes must base decisions on criteria that include artistic excellence and artistic merit.
- Programming, whether virtual or in-person, must be accessible to, and engage with, individuals and artists of all abilities in compliance with federal law.
- The NEA recommends 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

Folk and traditional arts funding is intended to support living cultural traditions in every state, jurisdiction, or region. The NEA envisions stable, outreach-driven programs that are responsive to a region's folk and traditional arts heritage. RAOs are encouraged to support professional, paid positions in the folk and traditional arts. Possible components might include, but are not limited to, activities such as fieldwork to identify and document underserved folk and traditional artists; apprenticeship and/or mentorship programs; folk arts in education programs; technical assistance; training and/or professional development; and regionwide activities that increase public awareness of living cultural heritage.

Accessibility

Accessibility funding is available to support professional development (for staff members of RAOs and member SAAs) and subawards related to accessibility requirements for cultural organizations and engagement with the disability community.

National Endowment for the Arts, Regional, and State Partnership

The 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 invest in the network through State and Regional Partnership Agreement grants 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.

The NEA acknowledges 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 affiliation from one RAO to another, or may choose not to participate as a member of an RAO. Changes to a state's RAO membership must be preceded by at least one full year of planning by all the agencies involved, including the NEA.

Authorizing Statute

The NEA offers this funding opportunity under the authority of 20 U.S.C. § 954.

Eligibility Requirements for Regional Arts Organizations

To be eligible for Partnership Agreement grant funding from the NEA, an RAO must:

- Be comprised of at least three (3) member SAAs
- Meet the NEA's Legal Requirements at the time of application.
- 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 throughout the life of the award.

Planning Process

The RAO 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.

An RAO must submit its regional arts plan with its Partnership Agreement grant application.

Subawards

RAOs that subaward NEA funds or cost share funds for the Partnership grant award must:

- Require subrecipients to provide a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) before issuing a subaward.
- Report awards of $30,000 or more in federal funds and, if required, information about the compensation of executives related to those grants to System for Award Management (SAM).
- Base subaward funding decisions on criteria that include artistic excellence and artistic merit.
- Ensure 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 (including specific requirements related to the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Civil Rights laws).

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

For full requirements for subawards, see Appendix A of the Partnership Agreements General Terms and Conditions. When applicable, a Partnership Agreement award may also require specific terms and conditions (§ 200.308). Should there be inconsistency between requirements, specific terms and conditions for an award supersede the General Terms and Conditions.

Award Amounts & Cost Share

Award Amounts

Funding is available to support region-identified goals and activities, including additional funding for specific priorities such as Folk and Traditional Arts, Accessibility, and the Regional Engagement Program, subject to availability of NEA funds.

Partnership Agreement awards are discretionary awards. Funding amounts are determined through a formulaic process that includes consideration of available funding, previous award levels, current RAO program offerings, and the region's population figures.

Cost Share Funds

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

Period of Performance

Awards are intended to support activities, and may begin no earlier than July 1, 2027.

All costs included in the Project Budget, whether supported by NEA funds or cost share funds, must be expended during the award's period of performance, including all costs associated with subaward activity. Subawards must take place and be closed out during the Partnership Agreement award's period of performance.

Application Contents & Format

Application Instructions

Detailed instructions on how to prepare and submit your application can be found on the Partnership Agreement Grants page, under "Grant Program Guidelines and Instructions."

Applications Recommended for Funding

Following the tentative funding offer notification (anticipated to be April 2027), all applicants must complete and submit a Partnership Agreement grant budget for NEA review. Instructions and deadlines for providing the budget and other required documents will be included with the offer notification.

Submission Requirements & Deadlines

Pre-Application Required Registration

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 "How to Apply" section provides information about registration, including links to each registration site, and support resources.

Submission Methods

SUBMIT APPLICATION VIA GRANTS.GOV
Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov. To begin the submission process, access the Grant Opportunity Package on the Partnership Agreements Grants page, under the "How to Apply" heading.

Contact Information

See the Contacts page for contact information for NEA staff, Login.gov, SAM, and Grants.gov.

Application Submission Dates and Times

Step	Date
Grant Program Details and Application Instructions Published	June 2026
Application Package Available on Grants.gov	June 2026
Submit Application to Grants.gov	**September 29, 2026, 11:59 pm ET**
Anticipated notification of recommended funding or rejection	April 2027
Earliest Start Date for Proposed Project	July 1, 2027

Grants.gov must receive your validated application no later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on September 29, 2026.

The NEA suggests 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.

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

Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs Executive Order 12372.

Application Review

Review Criteria

NEA staff review applications to confirm that eligibility requirements are met. In addition, external reader reviewers will provide reader comments related to application narrative and regional arts plan documents addressing:

- The RAO's operating environment, mission, and goals.
- The RAO's planning process, including:
  - efforts made to engage constituents through a wide variety of means (such as public meetings, surveys, interviews, virtual engagement, and digital communications, as relevant to various constituent groups); and
  - efforts made to include a wide range of constituents 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 constituent engagement during 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 arts plan.
- The RAO's programming, including programs and activities reflected in the regional arts plan, and as relevant, programs and activities with shared state and federal goals and objectives (FY27: Folk and Traditional Arts, Accessibility, and artist-centered engagement through the Regional Engagement Program). Programming information should include details related to:
  - implementation of the arts-related programs and services, and
  - related planning, accomplishments, challenges, and/or opportunities.
- The RAO's record of financial stewardship, including cost-effective management and success in expanding and diversifying non-federal revenue sources.

Review Process

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 Chairman of the NEA. The Chairman reviews the Council's recommendations and makes the final decision on all grant awards.

Application Status Updates

Applicants will receive a tentative funding offer or a notice of rejection via email. Refer to the Application Calendar for expected notification dates. Do not request the status of your application before the listed notification date. Applicants tentatively recommended for funding will receive a preliminary congratulatory message, with a request for required project and budget updates.

Award Notices

Official grant award notification (i.e., a notice of action authorized by the NEA Grants Management Office) is the only legal and valid confirmation of award. This process may take several months depending on factors such as the number of awards to be processed, clarity of submitted project budgets and updates, Congressional appropriations level, etc.

All NEA awards are contingent on maintaining an active SAM registration, and compliance with 2 CFR 200, NEA's legislation 20 U.S.C. § 954 and 955, along with other federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders that apply to federal financial assistance awards and established NEA policies. 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, or if the project is not compliant with applicable statutes, regulations, or executive orders.

Risk Review

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

Reporting on Previous Awards

To receive an NEA Partnership Agreement award, the applicant must be in compliance with all reporting requirements for any prior NEA awards, including submission of acceptable annual and final reports.

Post Award Requirements & Administration

Prohibition on Supplanting Non-Federal Funds

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 RAO from non-federal funds.

General Terms & Conditions

Federal government-wide and agency-specific requirements that relate to NEA awards are highlighted in our *General Terms & Conditions (GTC)*. The GTCs incorporate the adoption of 2 CFR Part 200 by reference. 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 an 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, including any updates to it.

Crediting Requirement

Recipients must clearly acknowledge NEA support in their programs and related promotional material including publications and websites. Acknowledgments should include the NEA logo wherever possible. In addition, we will provide detailed crediting language for RAOs to use with their own subrecipients.

Project Reporting and Evaluation

If your period of performance is longer than one year, you will be required to submit annual performance and financial reports for each 12-month period of the award.

When a grant is completed, you must submit a final report and answer questions detailing all activities conducted under the Regional Arts Plan (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.

Legal Requirements and Assurance of Compliance

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.

Civil Rights

The Office of Civil Rights investigates complaints about compliance with accessibility standards as well as other federal civil rights statutes. For further information visit Civil Rights FAQs for Applicants and Grantees, or contact the Office of Civil Rights at 202-682-5454 or civilrights@arts.gov.

Laws Relating to Lobbying (31 U.S.C. 1352)

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/matching 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. (See Application Instructions, Step 2)

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.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at an average of 28 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, 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.

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