



MADISON
Arts
COMMISSION

Artists at Work Grant Application

Deadline: January 12th, 2026 at 11:59 PM

Apply:

<https://airtable.com/appHOATFDQItDEyDV/pag1s5ByVaHHghlpl/form>

Summary

The City of Madison is seeking proposals for 2026 that will contribute to workforce development and diversification within the music and performing arts sector. The Artists at Work (AAW) program will offer a unique opportunity for one-time support for art organizations wishing to hire or partially support an existing artist/creative to aid the organization to promote cultural tourism within the City of Madison.

Proposal must indicate hiring of a creative strategist to work on promoting Madison's music and performing arts scene. Development, fundraising, and lobbying positions are not eligible. Funds may only be used for labor expenses.

The City's 2026 Room Tax budget authorizes \$75,000 for Artists at Work awards in 2026. Applicants may apply for \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$15,000 in support. The Madison Arts Commission will review all applications and make funding decisions. Half of the grant will be paid upon successful execution of a contract, and the rest will be paid after the submission and approval of a final report. All awards must be used by December 7, 2026. No extensions will be granted due to Room Tax requirements. Applicants who do not submit a final report by December 7, 2026, will forfeit their second payment, and become ineligible for subsequent AAW Grants.

Language and Disability Access Needs

If you need an interpreter, translator, materials in alternate format or other accommodation to access this information, please call (608) 267-8727 immediately.

Si necesita un intérprete, traductor, algún material en otro formato u otras adaptaciones para acceder a esta información, llame al (608) 267-8727 de inmediato.

Yog tias koj xav tau ib tug neeg txhais lus, tus neeg txhais ntawv, los sis xav tau cov ntaub ntawv ua lwm hom ntawv los sis lwm cov kev pab kom paub txog cov lus qhia no, thov hu rau (608) 267-8727 tam sim no.

如果您获取此类信息时需要口译人员、翻译人员、不同格式的材料 (608) 267-8727

Scoring Criteria

Applications will be scored based on the following criteria:

1. **PROMOTES CULTURAL TOURISM**-Organization intends to use all funds in a position that devotes 51% of staff time to tourism promotion, tourism development, and destination marketing for the City of Madison. **30 Points**
 - a. All proposals must be in compliance with Wisconsin State ([sec. 66.0615, Wis. Stats.](#))
 - b. Proposals should have a clear strategy for how the position will likely generate paid overnight stays at an establishment that contributes to Room Tax revenue. Include the following topics:



- i. Community Engagement
 - ii. Collaborations and partnerships
 - iii. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (diverse programming, drawing new and diverse audiences)
 - iv. Tourism and Marketings
- c. Applicants must commit to support the new regional music brand that will be finalized in 2026
2. **ARTISTIC & EDUCATIONAL MERIT** – the applicant organization advances the quality of arts in the community. **30 Points**
 - a. Artistic quality.
 - b. Proposal advances or expands the artistic capacity of the organization.
 - c. Innovative.
3. **FEASIBILITY** – evidence of careful financial planning and organizational capacity. **10 Points**
 - a. Budget meets all stated requirements, and the proposed pay is reasonable.
 - b. Applicants show the organizational capacity to support additional staff and accomplish position goals.
 - c. Proposal has clearly defined outcomes
4. **IMPORTANCE** – value to the target audience, the City, and its residents; value to the organization; value to the creative worker. **10 Points**
5. **ACCESS** – potential of this position to increase arts access in the community. **20 Points**
 - a. Demonstrates potential of the proposal to advance the availability of arts in the community.
 - b. Applicants include evidence of planning to serve diverse and/or new audiences.

Eligibility

1. Organizations with a Madison address and tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) or federally recognized Indian tribal governments are eligible to apply.
2. The position must attract overnight tourists to the City of Madison.
3. Proposal must indicate hiring of a creative worker. (Development, fundraising, and lobbying positions are not eligible.)
4. Only one proposal per organization will be considered.
5. Eligible expenditures include those for labor expenses.



Review Process

The Madison Arts Commission (MAC) administers these funds. MAC members will review applications based on the stated criteria.

Contracting & Reporting Requirements

All allocated funds will be administered through contracts with the City of Madison, Planning Division. Funded agencies will be required to submit a final program and expense report. If funded, the City of Madison reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of a contract with the selected organization. City purchases of service contracts include requirements regarding nondiscrimination, consideration of vulnerable populations, Affirmative Action, and mandatory insurance coverage. Awardees may be requested to appear before the Madison Arts Commission and Room Tax Commission in the summer of 2026 to share their work/impact.

Timeline

January 12, 2026, at 11:59 PM CST	Application Due
January 22, 2026	Applicants Notified of awards
February 1, 2026, to November 31, 2026	Artists at Work Grant Period
December 7, 2026	Final Report and 2 nd invoice Due

Questions

If you have any questions about these requirements or processes, please email madisonarts@cityofmadison.com. We reserve the right to request additional reporting materials.