



City of Grand Forks

Staff Report

Committee of the Whole – December 8, 2025

City Council – December 15, 2025

APPROVED & ACCEPTED

by City Council

12/15/2025

Maureen Storstad

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City Auditor

Agenda Item: 2026 Arts Regrant Program

Submitted by: Andy Conlon, Economic Development Manager

Prepared by: Anna Henningsgard, Planner

Staff Recommended Action: Approve funding recommendations and disbursement of funds as described herein

Committee Recommended Action: Motion by Berg, second by Lunski to move staff recommendation to City Council with a recommendation to approve. Motion carried 6-1 with Osowski dissenting.

Council Action: Motion by Berg, second by Lunski to approve recommendation.
Motion passed 6-1 with Osowski dissenting.

BACKGROUND:

The Planning & Community Development Department administers the Arts Regrant Program, which is budgeted at \$159,135 (Fund 2163) for the 2026 program year. The deadline for applications was November 14th; 18 requests totaling \$283,600 were received. These were reviewed and ranked by a review committee consisting of:

Dave Badman
Brandon Bochenski
Hamzat Koriko

Tricia Lunski
Shilo Previti

Bret Weber
Bridget West

Review committee members ranked the applications in priority order. Similar to last year, the committee prioritized applications involving new organizations and new or substantially expanded projects. The committee met on November 24th, reviewed their overall rankings, and made the funding recommendations shown on the following page. Similar to previous years, the funding recommendations incorporate a hybrid approach based on tiered rankings and past funding history.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF FACT:

- The City has funded this program since 2001. It was previously administered by NoVAC (North Valley Arts Council) and the Community Foundation.
- Applicants must have an arts-focused mission and be a non-profit organization with tax exempt status, or have a fiscal agent that is. Requests for both specific projects and general operating support are eligible. Maximum grant request is \$30,000.

Agency	Amount Requested	Recommended Funding
Summer Performing Arts	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Empire Arts Center	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Arts for Vets	\$30,000.00	\$18,500.00
ND Museum of Art	\$30,000.00	\$18,500.00
Theatre Without Walls	\$10,000.00	\$9,000.00
Northern Valley Youth Orchestras	\$22,000.00	\$14,250.00
Grand Cities Children's Choir	\$20,000.00	\$14,000.00
Muddy Waters Clay Center	\$9,500.00	\$4,750.00
GGF Symphony Orchestra	\$20,000.00	\$9,500.00
ArtWise	\$15,000.00	\$9,500.00
ND Ballet Company & Academy	\$15,000.00	\$7,135.00
Art Matters	\$9,100.00	\$4,500.00
UND Writers Conference	\$10,000.00	\$5,000.00
Grand Forks Chorales	\$8,500.00	\$4,000.00
ND Shakespeare Festival	\$6,000.00	\$4,000.00
The Empty State Theatre	\$20,000.00	\$4,000.00
Greater Grand Forks Community Theatre	\$20,000.00	\$4,000.00
Public Arts Commission	\$7500.00	\$2,500.00
	\$283,600	\$159,135

Application #	Agency	Project Name	Description	Proposed Number of Audience Members	Proposed Number of Artists	Amount Requested	Total Project Cost
AR-01	Northern Valley Youth Orchestras	NVYO 2026: Building Community through Music	Support costs related to prepare and perform outreach concerts.	1,800	170	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 70,500.00
AR-02	Summer Performing Arts	MySPA 2026	Immersive Fine Arts experience for K-12 and 12+ students with special needs and abilities.	600	45	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 22,750.00
AR-03	Muddy Waters Clay Center	Showroom/Gallery and Office Upgrade	Materials & professional labor needs to update showroom & office areas.	12,300	3,470	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 14,500.00
AR-04	Empty State Theatre	the Empty State: Season Three	Performance rights & royalties, venue rental, production costs, artist fees, and marketing.	500	55	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 68,000.00
AR-05	Grand Cities Children's Choir	Your Voice is Your Superpower	Funding new instrumental education program and for financially supporting the two major free concerts performances.	3950	335	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 69,660.00
AR-06	UND Writers Conference	57th Annual UND Writers Conference: "Fables & Futures"	Support for the 57th Annual UND Writers Conference - speakers' fees & transportation costs. Support community workshops.	1,200	7	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 75,706.00
AR-07	Grand Forks Chorales	Beyond Barriers: Fostering Intergenerational Musical Connection Among Older Adults in Senior Communities	Musician & artistic staff compensation to maintain professional quality, sheet music, and the logistical support for rehearsals and final public performance.	800	52	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 49,032.00
AR-08	Public Arts Commission	ArtFest 2026	Vendor support and enhance key areas of the festival.	20,000	150	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 31,450.00
AR-09	ND Shakespeare Festival	Shakespeare's Macbeth and Will Week	Support season artists	1,200	32	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 31,413.00
AR-10	Empire Arts Center	From Page to Stage	Licensing & production costs of 4 shows.	4,400	85	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
AR-11	ArtWise	Student Art Show and Open Studios	ArtWise exhibits at Grand Cities Mall	11,450	5,650	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 17,500.00
AR-12	ND Ballet Company & Academy	Dancing Beyond Barriers: Expanding Access to the Arts Through Ballet	Enhance outreach efforts, development of new adaptive dance programming, support artistic & productions costs	3500	650	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 65,000.00
AR-13	Arts for Vets	Arts for Vets Galleries/Productions/Classes	Program offerings, classes, and operational expenses	50,000	6,500	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 264,500.00
AR-14	Theatre Without Walls	The Cream of Wheat Caper: A melodrama on the Red River	Rent a venue and production costs.	800	8	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 21,500.00
AR-15	ND Museum of Art	Flexible, Responsive Access for Museum Equity	Staffing, materials, preparation, and accessibility resources.	0	0	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 33,000.00
AR-16	Greater Grand Forks Community Theatre	Programming Support for our 78th Season	Purchase performance rights, scripts, costumes, set cots, props, productions, and educational artists' contracts	2,800	170	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
AR-17	Art Matters	Art Matters	Supplies for art packs, summer programming, administrative costs.	5,000	2,100	\$ 9,100.00	\$ 12,000.00
AR-18	Greater Grand Forks Symphony Orchestra	2025-26 Spring Series & Chamber Music Festival	Support musicians and operational support.	1,950	65	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 61,656.00
						\$ 283,600.00	\$ 1,003,167.00