



County Fair Arts Access and Cultural Heritage Grant—Competitive

The **Request for Proposals (RFP)** is to help applicants make informed decisions about applying for and managing the County Fair Arts Access and Cultural Heritage Grant—Competitive.

Packet includes:

- RFP: general program information
- Attachment A: List of Example Proposals
- Attachment B: Proposal Evaluation Profile

2011 Laws of Minnesota, Article 4, Section 2, Subdivision 10

Application Due Date: February 13, 2012.

- All proposals must be received by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) no later than **4:30pm C.S.T. on Monday, February 13, 2012.**
- Faxed submissions will **not** be accepted.

For questions about the grant program or completing the application, contact:

Emily Murphy
MN Department of Agriculture
Marketing and Development Division
625 Robert Street North
St Paul, MN 55155

Direct Line: (651) 201-6648
Emily.Murphy@state.mn.us

Answers to all questions regarding the application will be provided on the following site:

<http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/countyfair/cfcompetitive.aspx>

625 Robert St. N., St. Paul, MN 55155-2538 • 651-201-6000 or 1-800-967-2474 • www.mda.state.mn.us

In accordance with Americans With Disabilities Act, an alternative form of communication is available upon request.

TTD: 1-800-627-3529 • An Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

[Request for Proposal]

Background

On November 8, 2008, Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. Commonly known as the “Legacy Amendment,” the amendment to Minnesota’s constitution increased the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent and dedicated 20% of the resulting revenue to be deposited in the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The Minnesota Constitution states revenue from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund “may be spent only for arts, arts education, and arts access and to preserve Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage.” Minnesota Constitution, Article XI, Section 15

In 2011, the Minnesota Legislature authorized the MDA to spend \$1.4 million annually (\$2.8 for the biennium) of Legacy Arts and Cultural Heritage Funds to provide grants to each of the state’s county fairs. \$700,000 of the \$1.4 million will be distributed as part of the Equal Share program. The remaining \$700,000 will be distributed in a competitive grant program, “for the development or enhancement of county fair facilities or other projects or programs that provide access to the arts, arts education, or agricultural, historical, and cultural heritage programs.”

Program Objectives

- To ensure all Minnesotans have the opportunity to participate in the arts, arts education, and in programs that preserve and promote Minnesota’s agricultural, historical, and cultural heritage.
- To increase exposure to, and preserve, the diversity of cultural heritages that make up Minnesota’s history and culture.
- To promote and highlight artistic excellence and exceptional programming, administered by state and local organizations and by individuals.
- To engage new audiences by removing barriers—whether they be geographic, economic, related to age, racial/ethnic characteristics, disability—to access the arts, arts education, and programs that preserve and promote Minnesota’s agricultural, historical, and cultural heritage.

Project Requirements

- I. Funded activities must **directly** develop or enhance county fair facilities or other projects or programs that **provide access to the arts, arts education, or agricultural, historical, and cultural heritage programs**.
- II. Funded activities must supplement traditional programming and not substitute. Grant money must allow a fair to undertake **a project that goes above and beyond what traditional financial sources allow and does not supplant, replace or substitute portions of the regular budget**.

Funding

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is charged with distributing approximately \$700,000 in competitive grants to the state’s county fairs, for the development or enhancement of county fair facilities or other projects or programs that provide access to the arts, arts education, or agricultural, historical, and cultural heritage programs.

- I. Award Distribution:
 - a. For **Construction and Capital Improvement** projects, the **grant is capped at \$50,000**. Approximately 40% of \$700,000 (\$280,000) will be dedicated to funding construction and capital improvement projects.
 - b. For **Event Enhancement**, the **grant is capped at \$12,000**. Approximately 30% of \$700,000 (\$210,000) will be dedicated to funding event enhancement projects.
 - c. For **Programming**, the **grant is capped at \$12,000**. Approximately 30% of \$700,000 (\$210,000) will be dedicated to funding programming.
- II. Each county fair can submit one application in **each** of the following categories, **Construction and Capital Improvement, Event Enhancement, Programming**, but will only be **awarded one grant**. If a fair applies for multiple categories, they can rank their first, second, and third project priorities.
 - a. **Construction and Capital Improvement** projects are large scale enhancements and improvements to existing structures or the construction of new structures. This could include constructing a new arts building,

constructing an addition to a heritage building, building new stage, large scale renovation of a historical structure. When applicable, Construction and Capital Improvement projects can also include small scale infrastructure projects that directly relate to the arts, arts education, or agricultural, historical, and cultural heritage programming occurring in the building.

- b. **Event Enhancements** are small scale infrastructure improvements and enhancements. This could include commissioning murals, public art, improving a stage's sound system, small scale restoration projects of historical buildings, investment in display cases, signage, art easels to display paintings and photographs.
- c. **Programming** is an event or project that actively engages fair visitors. This could include reenactments, workshops, performances, demonstrations, guided tours, presentations, displays, compiling historical records for a book.

No matching funds are required. However, if matching dollars and outside resources do exist, they must be listed on the application. Note, Construction and Capital Improvement projects with matching funds will be rated higher on the Evaluation Profile than those without matching funds. Additionally, any proposal with a total project cost exceeding the grant cap, must have attached to the application a letter explaining the source of matching dollars. This letter should demonstrate that the fair is financially capable of completing the project.

Application and Funding Timeline

- I. To be considered for funding, **all proposals must be received** by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture no later than **4:30pm on Monday, February 13, 2012** (ie: the application deadline). Late proposals will not be considered.
- II. Grantees will be notified by April 16, 2012.
- III. Contracts will be mailed to grantee by May 1, 2012.
- IV. Grantees will have until June 30, 2013, to spend the funds, complete the projects, and submit final documents.

Proposal Submission

Proposals may be submitted via mail, in person, or electronically to:

MN Department of Agriculture
Marketing and Development Division
Attn: Emily Murphy
625 Robert Street North
St Paul, MN 55155
Email: Emily.Murphy@state.mn.us

Faxed submissions will not be accepted.

For email submissions, the Department is not liable for any problems or delays with electronic submittal of documents. Applicants are solely responsible to make sure applications are received by the deadline.

Acceptable Projects and Expenses

- I. To be eligible for a grant, the project(s) must develop or enhance county fair facilities or other projects or programs that directly provide access to the arts, arts education, or agricultural, historical, and cultural heritage programs. Funds must "supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes and may not be used as a substitute." Minnesota Constitution Article XI, Section 15.
- II. Payment for administrative expenses, such as salaries, must be for duties directly related to and necessary to the proposal's execution.
- III. Examples of Acceptable Projects are listed in Attachment A, which is included at the end of the RFP.

Unacceptable Projects and Expenses

Examples of unacceptable projects include, but are not limited to:

- a. Activities that do not have the arts, arts education, Minnesota’s agricultural, historical, or cultural heritage, as the primary focus.
- b. Events with a primary focus on fundraising.
- c. General entertainment.
- d. Facility improvements which had already been in the fair’s plan and budget.
- e. To compensate ongoing personnel in full or in part.
- f. To pay an artist or arts organization to provide essentially the same service that has been featured at the fair in the past.
- g. Payment of debts incurred before grant application is approved.

Eligible Applicant

Each of the state’s 95 county fairs, as represented by the Minnesota Federation of County Fairs, may apply. The fair must have a board of directors or governing body that provides input on the proposal and oversight of the grant funds.

This request for proposal does not obligate the state to award a contract or complete the project, and the state reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered in the best interest of the state.

Grant Review Board

A grant review board will be selected by the Commissioner of Agriculture. The board will consist of no more than seven people and may include individuals from the Minnesota arts community, individuals with an expertise in Minnesota history, representatives from the Minnesota Federation of County Fairs, and individuals with a background in construction. The board will make recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture as to what projects to fund. The Commissioner of Agriculture will make the final decision on which projects to fund.

Grant Review Process

All responses received by 4:30pm on Monday, February 13, 2012, will be evaluated. Proposals will be reviewed, scored and ranked by the grant review board. The resulting rankings will help determine which projects can be funded, based on available funds. Applicants will be informed if their application will or will not be funded by April 16, 2012.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated according to the “Evaluation Profile” included at the end of the RFP.

Selection criteria for evaluating the grant applications will include:

1. Project plan and application completeness
2. Budget and financial capacity of the applicant
3. Capacity to complete project and likelihood of success
4. Project merit or quality, and consistency with program objectives
5. Regional impact and need for art, heritage and history programs in the community.
6. Project evaluation plan
7. Impact of award on fair
8. Matching funds (**Evaluation criteria for Capacity Building Projects only**)

Payment Method and Schedule

Payments may be dispensed as a paper check or direct deposit via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

90% of funds will be available upon receipt of approved signatures on the grant contract. 10% of funds will be payable upon project completion and the submission and approval of the Closeout Evaluation.

Grantee Responsibilities and Record Keeping

The Closeout Evaluation report and project expense receipts are due to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. The Closeout Evaluation and expense receipts must be received by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture before the final reimbursement can be made.

Site Visits

Grant monitoring visits involve both state granting agency staff and the grantee, and may occur during the grant period. The purpose of grant monitoring visits is to review and ensure progress against the grant's goals, to address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period, and to enhance communication channel between the state agency and the grantee.

Multi-organization Collaboration

Fairs that collaborate with an organization with expertise in areas the fair does not have and/or an organization that has a record of successfully administering high quality projects, will be rated higher on the Evaluation Profile.

Open Records

Application data are private or nonpublic data until grant applications are opened. Names, addresses and requested amounts then become public information. An entire application becomes public when an agency has completed negotiating the grant agreement with a grantee, unless protected by another statute.

Other Considerations

MDA reserves the right to:

- Request recent financial statements to assess the financial capacity of the applicant;
- Post funded proposals or final reports to the MDA website;
- Submit funded proposals or final reports to the Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC) to post on the LCC's public website;
- Reject any or all proposals received;
- Use any or all ideas submitted unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights;
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the RFP requirement and with appropriate notice to potential applicants, to best serve the interests of the State of Minnesota;
- Require a good faith effort on part of the project sponsor to work with MDA subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results in Minnesota;
- Withhold any payments when contract conditions are not met.

Conflicts of Interest

Responder must provide a list of all entities with which it has relationships that create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest with the work that is contemplated in this request for proposals. The list should indicate the name of the entity, the relationship, and a discussion of the conflict.

Organizational Conflicts of Interest

The responder warrants that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, and except as otherwise disclosed, there are no relevant facts or circumstances which could give rise to organizational conflicts of interest. An organizational conflict of interest exists when, because of existing or planned activities or because of relationships with other persons, a grantee is unable or potentially unable to carry out the proposed work of the grant in an impartial manner, or the grantee's objectivity in performing the proposed work for the grant is or might be otherwise impaired, or the grantee has an unfair competitive advantage. The responder agrees that, if after award, an organizational conflict of interest is discovered, an immediate and full disclosure in writing must be made to the Office of Grants Management which must include a description of the action which the grantee has taken or proposes to take to avoid or mitigate such conflicts. If an organizational conflict of interest is determined to exist, the State may, at its discretion, cancel the grant. In the event the responder was aware of an organizational conflict of interest prior to the award of the grant and did not disclose the conflict to the granting officer, the State may terminate the grant for default. The provisions of this clause must be included in all subcontracts for work to be performed similar to the service provided by the prime contractor, and the terms "contract," "contractor," and "contracting officer" modified appropriately to preserve the State's rights.

List of Acceptable Projects

Acceptable projects may include, but are not limited to, the following examples. This list is to serve as a guide and as a starting point. A list of successful projects will be compiled after the first year of funding.

Construction and Capital Improvement

- New buildings and construction (ie: art exhibitors building, heritage center, stage, history of agriculture building)
- Additions and enhancements to existing structures (ie: stage enhancements, additions to a history center, art and agriculture wing to 4-H building)
- Large to medium scale restoration of historic structures (ie: restoring a log cabin, restoring an old church)
- Small capital enhancements related to the programming which will occur in the new or improved structure (ie: sound system to complete a newly constructed stage; display cases and materials for a historical exhibit inside a newly restored historical building)

Event Enhancement:

- Display cases (ie: to showcase an exhibit loaned from the historical society)
- Display racks (ie: for quilts)
- Improved lighting in the arts building to better see the art exhibits
- Improved sound system for a stage
- Making a historic structure, such as an old school house, handicap accessible
- Small to medium scale restoration of a historic structure (ie: historically accurate shingling on a log cabin, new windows, improved displays in the historic structure)
- Signage—to explain a project’s artistic, historical, agricultural, cultural heritage relevance.
- Easels to display paints and photographs
- Public Art
- Murals

Programming

- Demonstrations (ie: spinning, harnessing draft horses, weaving, watercolor, basket weaving, butter making, pottery, waltzing)
- Reenactments (ie: one room school house, rendezvous, living history museums)
- Presentations (ie: heirloom varieties, county history, history of immigrants, portrait photography)
- Artists in residency (ie: collaborate with an outside organization like the Textile Center or Compas.org to bring an artist to the fair)
- Performances (ie: blue grass band, flamenco dancers, large puppets intended for public spaces)
- Displays
- Story Telling
- Children’s theater
- Workshops (ie: how to shear sheep, how to play the banjo)