Shakespeare in American Communities: Schools

# Application Guidelines

**Intent to Apply Deadline: January 25, 2024 @ 11:59p.m. Central time**

**Application Deadline: February 8, 2024 @ 11:59p.m. Central time**

Shakespeare in American Communities is a theater program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. Through grants to theater companies, this program supports high-quality productions and educational activities to young audiences throughout the United States.

## Eligibility

### Who should apply?

501c3 non-profit professional theater companies located in the U.S. or the Native Nations that share this geography and:

* Have a minimum of two years’ experience providing professional performances and related educational activities to middle and/or high schools.
* Can compensate all performers and related or supporting professional personnel at no less than the prevailing minimum compensation. (This requirement is in accordance with the regulations issued by the Secretary of Labor in part 505 of Title 29 of the [Code of Federal Regulations](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/part-505).)
* Agree to acknowledge Arts Midwest and the National Endowment for the Arts in all programs and press materials related to funded engagements.
* Have a valid [Unique Entity ID (UEI)](https://www.fsd.gov/sys_attachment.do?sys_id=3866d0061b13b8106397ec21f54bcb72) via SAM.gov (free to acquire).
* Can comply with [Federal eligibility requirements](https://www.artsmidwest.org/programs/federal_requirements).

## Project Requirements

### New this year!

Grantees are not required to produce original Shakespeare plays. Rather, they may conduct performances and educational activities using the works of William Shakespeare as an inspiration. Applicants will need to provide a short explanation about how the play(s) they will use relate(s) to Shakespeare.

Grantees may conduct performances and educational activities outside of a formal educational institution. For example, activities may take place in community settings (e.g., libraries, community centers, squares and plazas, markets, parks, etc.) Activities must still reach middle/high school age participants.

The goal of these changes is to provide theater companies more flexibility in engaging audiences across their communities.

### Perform **a play written by (or inspired by) William Shakespeare; an adaptation of Shakespeare’s text; or a production that incorporates scenes, monologues, and/or sonnets by Shakespeare.**

* The actors in the production must be professionals, paid at no less than the prevailing minimum compensation. (This requirement is in accordance with the regulations issued by the Secretary of Labor in part 505 of Title 29 of the [Code of Federal Regulations](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/part-505).) It is not required that actors be part of an Actors’ Equity contract.
* Performances may be held in a theater company’s facility, a school, a community venue, or virtually.

### Conduct educational activities with young audiences that explore and address Shakespeare’s work in modern context.

* Activities must be led by experienced teaching artists, educators, or actors with strong credentials and training.
* Examples include workshops, pre- or post-performance discussions/talkbacks, curriculum-based residencies, or other activities that offer interaction between students and teaching artists or actors. Study guides *do not* qualify as an activity.
* Activities must be related to the production being performed for students.
* Virtual and/or pre-recorded activities are eligible as long as students have the opportunity to interact live and in real-time with teaching artists in some capacity.

### Reach five or more middle and/or high school-age, underserved audiences with performances and related educational activities.

Underserved refers to groups whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited relative to geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability. Audiences could include, but are not limited to, communities of color, people with disabilities, older adults, rural areas, reservations, lower income communities, LGBTQ+ communities, veterans, and justice-impacted citizens.

## Grant Awards

**Applicants may request grant awards ranging from $15,000 to $25,000.**  These grants are federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. These funds derive from Federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts (CFDA #45.024: Promotion of the Arts\_Grants to Organizations and Individuals).

An organization may apply to both the Schools program and the Juvenile Justice program. However, there must be no overlapping programming or costs between the applications and budgets.

### Eligible expenses

Eligible expenses include: Artistic fees for actors, directors, designers, choreographers, etc.; production costs of props, costumes, set, etc.; travel costs associated with touring productions or artist travel; a prorated portion of staff salaries; printing and marketing expenses; transportation; other direct costs associated with the production and educational programming.

Do not include [unallowable expenses](https://artsmidwest.org/get-support/federal-eligibility-requirements/).

### Matching requirement

Applicants will be required to demonstrate matching funds on a 1:1 basis for their requested grant amount. (For example, if an applicant requests a $15,000 Shakespeare grant, the total project budget must be at least $30,000.)

Federal funds cannot be used as match.

Required intent to apply information

* Applicant organization details (EIN, UEI number from SAM.gov, annual operating budget, mission statement, organization location information).
* Project start and end dates
* Primary contact information
* Short summary of project activities
* The name of the production/play
* Grant request amount

Required application information

* Summary and statistics for proposed activities
* Anticipated number of partners, events and individuals served
* Accessibility accommodations
* Applicant organization, programming, partnerships, community/audiences, leadership, DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility) narratives
* Project Budget

## Selection Criteria

Applications are reviewed by an independent advisory panel composed of a diverse group of arts and literature experts and other individuals with broad knowledge of community programs. Panel composition changes annually.

Grantees are selected based on:

* Artistic excellence and merit of programming. The panel will review the evidence of sound artistic decisions, the professional team of artists and staff, the rationale for choosing the play, the production’s viewpoint and themes, and the relevance of the play to today’s youth.
* Depth of audience engagement. The panel will consider the content of workshops, talkbacks, and other activities; the credentials and experience of teaching artists or actors; the depth of engagement with students; and the consideration of the needs of students of different backgrounds, abilities, ages, and learning styles.
* Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The panel will evaluate the applicant’s commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as they relate to the proposed project. This could include commitment to racial, gender, and age diversity in the artistic team and cast; equitable pay for artists; relevant content and themes of the production and educational activities; accessibility accommodations; reaching schools from underserved communities; etc.
* The ability and capacity to carry out the project. The panel will consider the applicant’s ability to manage and implement a federal award. This could include the feasibility to reach five or more schools with educational programming; organizational capacity; proven fiscal responsibility; etc.

## Timeline

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| Apply   | There is a two-step application process.* Submit an intent to apply by January 25.
* Submit a complete application by February 8.

Arts Midwest staff will review for eligibility and completeness. We will follow up with any questions or corrections before applications proceed to the review stage. |
| Review   | All complete and eligible applications will be reviewed by a panel. The panel will consider the following criteria:* Artistic excellence and merit of programming
* Depth of project to engage audiences
* Ability and capacity to carry out the project
* Project commitments to DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility) in partnership with communities. Specifically for this last criterion, the panel will review the applicant’s plan for including audiences with limited access to the arts and the accessibility measures undertaken to ensure access for members of the public.
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| Award  | All applicants will receive an email notification of award decisions in May 2024 following approval from Arts Midwest’s Board of Directors. |
| Engage | Funded project activities occur between August 1, 2024, and July 31, 2025. Final reports are due about a month after conclusion of planned activities.Any changes or updates to planned activities should be communicated to Arts Midwest staff as early as possible.  |

## Reporting Requirements

A preliminary event listing will be due 30 days before the project starts and a final report will be due 30 days after the project is completed. The final report consists of a final listing of events, statistics on audiences and artists, narratives, and a final budget.

## Accessibility

Arts Midwest works to ensure that grant guidelines, presentations, and any other written materials are created with accessibility and disability experiences in mind.

For all grant applications, we use an online platform called [SmartSimple,](https://artsmidwest.us-1.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp) unless applicants request another route. SmartSimple has a dedicated Quality Assurance Team and a consultant who helps test usability on a quarterly basis.

We’ve used other tools for grant applications and are happy to work with you such as providing an adapted form in Microsoft Word or taking verbal responses.

Please [complete this form](https://form.asana.com/?k=qktzhgcymrEcAOig3CaedQ&d=7149965253701) so we can help make a grant or program accessible to you.

Visit our [Accessibility Policy](https://artsmidwest.org/accessibility-policy/) for more information on our commitment to accessibility.

## Contact

For any questions, please email grants@artsmidwest.org.