Shakespeare in American Communities: Apprenticeships

# Application Guidelines

**Intent to Apply Deadline: January 30, 2025 @ 11:59p.m. Central time**

**Application Deadline: February 13, 2025 @ 11:59p.m. Central time**

## About Shakespeare in American Communities: Apprenticeships

Shakespeare in American Communities is a theater program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

There are three grant opportunities available via Shakespeare in American Communities: Schools, Juvenile Justice, and Apprenticeships.

These guidelines relate to the Shakespeare in American Communities Apprenticeship opportunity.

### New this year!

The apprenticeship program is a new opportunity for the 2025-2026 season. Through grants to non-profit theater organizations, this program supports paid apprenticeships for early administrators and technicians throughout the United States.

The goals of this program are to:

1. Support theater companies in hiring emerging theater professionals and administrators to gain on-the-job experience in the industry.
2. Support theater companies that are providing cross-sector theater related activities in their communities.

The programming that apprentices support does NOT have to be Shakespeare related.

## How to Apply

### Eligibility Requirements

Shakespeare in American Communities welcomes applications from 501c3 non-profit theater companies located in the U.S. or the Native Nations that share this geography and:

* Have a minimum of two years’ experience providing community-based, cross-sector theater related activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, theater programs that work with or perform for people experiencing housing insecurity, people in hospital settings or senior centers, and more. Apprentices would support and learn from these partnerships. This programming does NOT have to be Shakespeare related.
* Do not have overdue reports or funding moratoria with Arts Midwest.
* Have an UEI [Unique Entity ID] number from SAM.gov by late April 2025 in order to receive grant funds. Apply for a free UEI at SAM.gov.
* Can comply with [Federal eligibility requirements](https://artsmidwest.org/get-support/federal-eligibility-requirements/).

## Project Requirements

Programming must take place between August 1, 2025 – July 31, 2026.

**The grant award is $20,000 - 30,000, which requires a cash cost-share from the applicant equal to or greater than the grant request.**

These funds derive from Federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts (Assistance Listing #45.024: Promotion of the Arts\_Grants to Organizations and Individuals).

Organizations may submit an application for only ONE Shakespeare in American Communities grant opportunity: Schools, Juvenile Justice, or Apprenticeships.

Each Shakespeare in American Communities: Apprenticeship project must meet these requirements:

### Support paid apprenticeships for early theater administrators and technicians

* These individuals must be compensated fairly and should gain valuable experience working with other professionals in the field. Apprentices can be part-time or full-time.
* Roles that are eligible for the apprenticeship include: theater technicians, set designers, assistant directors, operations staff, human resources staff, communications and marketing staff.
* Roles that are ineligible include: actors, writers, and development staff.
* The apprentice should be employed by the theater for a minimum of six months between August 1, 2025 – July 31, 2026.
  + If an apprentice leaves their role before six months have been completed, the organization should hire a new apprentice to fulfil the role.
* These funds may support a new or existing apprenticeship program. [Example program 1](https://www.alliancetheatre.org/content/spelman-leadership-fellows). [Example program 2](https://www.woollymammoth.net/connectivity/fellowships/).
* The apprentice should have opportunities to support and learn from the company’s work in community-based theater.

### Participate in virtual and in-person convenings with other grantees

* Arts Midwest will host several virtual, and one in-person, networking and professional development convenings for Shakespeare in American Communities grantees. Travel, lodging, and limited food costs for one company representative will be covered by Arts Midwest for the in-person convening at the end of the grant cycle.

### 3. Provide a budget for the project that includes eligible expenses and demonstrates a plan for providing a one-to-one match for the grant.

* These employees must be compensated and should gain valuable experience working with other professionals in the field. Eligible expenses are those that directly relate to supporting an apprentice or fellow in your theater. They include:
  + Apprenticeship stipend/salary
  + Benefits
  + Professional development costs
  + Supplies related to onboarding and staffing this position (office supplies, software subscriptions, etc.)
* Please do not include [unallowable costs](https://artsmidwest.org/get-support/federal-eligibility-requirements/) in your budget. Unallowable [costs](https://artsmidwest.org/get-support/federal-eligibility-requirements/) include, but are not limited to:
  + Refreshments, concessions, food, and alcohol
  + Fellowships or cash prizes
  + Payment for facilities, purchase of capital equipment, or non-project related administrative expenses.
  + Overlapping project costs between federal awards, whether received directly from a federal agency or indirectly, such as through a state agency or other entity.
  + Entertainment costs, such as opening parties, receptions, or fundraisers designed to raise funds for your own organization and on behalf of another person, organization, or cause.
  + Programs restricted to any organization’s membership; programs must be promoted and available to the general public.
* Matching Requirement: Applicants will be required to demonstrate matching funds on a 1:1 basis for their grant.

To demonstrate the match, your expenses should be at least double your grant request. For a $25,000 Shakespeare grant, the total project budget must be at least $50,000. You will be required to demonstrate your match in the application. Federal funds cannot be used as match.

## Two-Step Application Process

For all grant applications, we use an online platform called [SmartSimple](https://artsmidwest.us-1.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp). Applicants will need to register if they are new to using the system. Previous applicants and grantees will be able to access the application by visiting the Funding Opportunities tile on the “Grants for Organizations” home page.

### Step 1: Intent to Apply

#### Questions and requirements:

* Applicant organization details (EIN, UEI number from SAM.gov, mission statement, annual operating budget, organization location information, primary contact information, publicity name).
* Short summary of apprenticeship role (250 words)
* Short summary of planned community-based activities (250 words)
* Project start and end dates
* Grant request amount

### Step 2: Full Application

1. Artistic Excellence and Merit
   * Describe your organization’s experience in community-based programming. (400 words)
   * Personnel supporting the apprenticeship: Indicate the individuals who would mentor/supervise the apprentice and cite at least 2-3 leadership experiences with community-based theatre projects. (400 words)
   * Listing of potential partners for your community-based programming.
2. Quality of the Apprenticeship Program
   * Describe the role and workload of the apprentice. (700 words)
     + - What programs or functions would this position support in your organization?
       - Please indicate if this is a new role in your organization or if you have a history of apprenticeship programs.
   * Timeline
     + Please provide a timeline for hiring the apprentice and the projects that apprentice will assist with
3. Planning for success
   * Goals of apprenticeship: What will the apprentice gain by participating in this program? What will the applicant organization gain? (400 words)
   * This program is intended to support a 6 to 11-month position. Please describe your plan for pivoting the funds if the apprentice leaves this role before the project ends. (200 words)  
     Positions that are vacated at or before 6 months are expected to be refilled.
4. Resource management
   * Organization’s total revenue (current fiscal year and last fiscal year)
   * Organization’s total expenses (current fiscal year and last fiscal year)
   * Project Budget

## Panel Review and Selection Criteria

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

The panel will use four criteria in the review process. Each criterion is on a scale of (5) for a maximum of (20) points per application.

Grantees are selected based on:

* Artistic excellence and merit of programming. The panel will review the plans for community-based programming, the abilities of the professional team of artists and staff, and planned partners.
* Quality of apprenticeship program. The panel will consider the applicant’s experience offering similar positions and the timeline and workload for the position.
* Planning for success. The panel will evaluate the plan for the apprenticeship, including how the applicant and the apprentice will benefit from this experience; goals that are clearly stated and align with the intent of Shakespeare in American Communities: Apprenticeships; and plans for pivoting the funds should the need arise.
* Resource management. The panel will consider the applicant’s ability to manage and implement a federal award. This could include organizational expertise; proven fiscal responsibility; etc.

## Timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Apply | There is a two-step application process.   * Submit a mandatory intent to apply by January 30. * Submit a complete application by February 13.   Arts Midwest staff will review applications 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 in March and April of 2025. |
| Award | All applicants will receive an email notification of award decisions in May 2025. |
| Convening | Grantees should plan to send one representative to an in-person convening in Minnesota in Summer of 2026. |
| Programming | Funded project activities occur between August 1, 2025, and July 31, 2026. 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 activity 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.

### Office Hours and Resources

If you have additional questions, we invite you to join Grants Officer Joshua Feist for office hours. You can sign up for office hours using the links below:

* 1pm-2pm CT Thursday, November 7, 2024. [Sign up here.](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqfu2gqzsqHNAtjehAnPLwaSZFXmf0ZcJo)
* 11am-12pm CT Tuesday, December 10, 2024. [Sign up here.](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIkf-6rpz0rEtNtP37GbDQ9rvA8oQuqnJN7)

*You can also always email Arts Midwest with your questions at* [*grants@artsmidwest.org*](mailto:culturalsustainability@artsmidwest.org)

### Accessibility

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

We are happy to work with applicants on alternative formats, including but not limited to using an adapted form in Microsoft Word or taking verbal responses.

Please [complete this form](https://form.asana.com/?k=qktzhgcymrEcAOig3CaedQ&d=7149965253701) before the intent to apply deadline so we can help make a grant or program accessible to you. We may not be able to accommodate requests made after January 23, 2025.

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](mailto:grants@artsmidwest.org) or call 612.238.8054.