



► FISCAL YEAR 2024

# Return on Investment Report Illinois





I want to extend our heartfelt thanks for your continued partnership with Arts Midwest. Together, we are amplifying creativity across Illinois and beyond.

In FY2024, we took steps to make the arts more inclusive. We launched the Midwest Award for Artists with Disabilities, giving \$3,000 awards to support visual artists and help them build their careers.

Our Creativity News Desk shared stories about the power of Midwestern creativity, focusing on Native, rural, and communities of color. We published 120 stories from across the region and brought together the Creative Midwest Media Cohort for an in-person learning retreat.

We also advanced our shared commitment to building new partnerships with federal agencies. In FY24, we connected with organizations like USDA Rural Development and Health and Human Services, working to identify new opportunities for the Midwest's creative sector.

Throughout our grants, programs, and other services, we're proud to support creativity, arts, and culture in Illinois, delivering a 333% return on investment to your constituents in FY24. We're excited for what lies ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Torrie Allen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Torrie Allen  
President & CEO, Arts Midwest

# Illinois At A Glance

FY24: July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



22  
Grants Awarded



12  
Communities Reached



\$66,200  
State Dues



\$286,537  
Returned

333%  
Return On Investment

See the last page of this report for a full breakdown of our FY24 investment in Illinois.



Like is Seem (2020; pastel on paper) by Matthew Bodett from Chicago, Illinois, one of the recipients of the 2023 Midwest Award for Artists with Disabilities. Courtesy of the artist.

We invest time, funds, and resources in organizations and individuals that advance creativity in Illinois.

<p><b>Creative Midwest Media Cohort</b></p> <p>We supported organizations in producing media projects that cover stories of Midwestern creativity through the Creative Midwest Media Cohort. This year-long pilot program included grants for storytelling projects and an in-person cohort convening in May 2024.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Organizations Supported</p>	<p><b>\$30,000</b> Awarded</p>	<p><b>4</b> Participants in Illinois</p>
<p><b>GIG Fund</b></p> <p>We distribute grants through the GIG Fund that support creative projects and educational events in the Midwest. These flexible funds help organizations present artists in their community by supporting programming and touring costs.</p>	<p><b>13</b> Organizations Supported</p>	<p><b>\$45,800</b> Awarded</p>	<p><b>3,347</b> Participants in Illinois</p>
<p><b>Midwest Award for Artists with Disabilities</b></p> <p>We support accessibility in the arts and celebrate Midwestern creativity through the Midwest Award for Artists with Disabilities. Awardees receive \$3,000 and are encouraged to use it toward growing their artistic career.</p>	<p><b>1</b> Artist Supported</p>	<p><b>\$3,000</b> Awarded</p>	
<p><b>NEA Big Read</b></p> <p>We partner with the National Endowment for the Arts to deliver the NEA Big Read. The NEA Big Read provides grants to organizations that bring communities together to read and discuss a book.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Organizations Supported</p>	<p><b>\$40,000</b> Awarded</p>	<p><b>1,217</b> Participants in Illinois</p>
<p><b>Shakespeare in American Communities</b></p> <p>We partner with the National Endowment for the Arts to deliver Shakespeare in American Communities. Grants support performances of and workshops about Shakespeare's plays in schools, community centers, and the juvenile justice system.</p>	<p><b>1</b> Organization Supported</p>	<p><b>\$25,000</b> Awarded</p>	<p><b>15,071</b> Participants in Illinois</p>



A performance by Avery R Young at the Hyde Park Jazz Festival in Chicago, Illinois, supported by Arts Midwest's GIG Fund. Photo by Mark Monaghan.

# Programs Overview

We support convenings, community artist residencies, and resource sharing opportunities in Illinois.

<h3>Creativity News Desk</h3> <p>The Creativity News Desk amplifies stories about the power of arts and creativity in the Midwest. We commission stories from writers, photographers, videographers, illustrators, and podcasters across our region.</p>	<b>12</b> Stories Featuring Illinois	<b>11,451</b> Readers in Illinois
<h3>Ideas Hub</h3> <p>We added ten new resources to the Ideas Hub, an online collection of free, curated articles and tools that help creative leaders foster growth within their organizations.</p>	<b>2,040</b> Readers in Illinois	
<h3>Jazz Road</h3> <p>We partnered with South Arts on Jazz Road, an artist-centric touring and residency grants program that works to spread jazz throughout the country. In September 2023, Arts Midwest held an Artistic Career Workshop in Minneapolis, MN for jazz artists to expand and enhance their careers.</p>	<b>3</b> Artists Supported	<b>\$34,637</b> Awarded
<h3>National Leaders of Color Fellowship</h3> <p>We partnered with the other United States Regional Arts Organizations on this professional development and networking initiative that aims to support multicultural leadership in the creative and cultural sector.</p>	<b>1</b> Illinois Participant	
<h3>World Fest</h3> <p>Through World Fest, we tour musicians to Midwestern communities to foster an understanding of and appreciation for global uniqueness and differences. In FY2024, World Fest artists engaged with communities in Illinois through weeklong in-person residencies.</p>	<b>16</b> Events	<b>1,639</b> Participants in Illinois

We provide opportunities for staff at our partner State Arts Agencies to connect, learn, and give feedback.

---

## State Arts Agency Connections

We hold semi-annual SAA Executive Director summits, bi-monthly video calls, regular check ins about our program and grants, and we gather when able at events like the NASAA Assembly. These conversations invite our members to discuss challenges and opportunities facing them, share ideas and resources, and consider future strategies for action. Our Board of Directors includes two SAA Executive Directors, who bring their expertise to Board meetings and discussions.

---

## Federal Agency Work

Arts Midwest partners with the Midwest state arts agencies to build relationships with representatives of federal agencies. In FY24, this work included continued research into federal funding opportunities throughout the year; planning meetings to determine next steps with federal agencies; meetings with representatives of the National Endowment for the Arts, USDA Rural Development, Health & Human Services, and Economic Development Administration; and presenting on Arts Midwest and the Midwest State Arts Agencies to the Chicago Federal Executive Board.

---

## Accessibility Support

We provide State Arts Agency accessibility coordinators with funding to attend the Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability (LEAD®) conference.

---

## Site Visits

Our staff visited Illinois for 10 days this year for development and board activities, the Creative States Coalition, and World Fest programming.

---

We collaborate with a network of writers, photographers, videographers, and illustrators to amplify impactful stories of arts, culture, and creativity in the Midwest.



## ACRE Bridges Urban and Rural Creativity in Illinois and Wisconsin

By Kate Mothes

The non-profit organizes residencies and exhibitions that connect emerging artists in Chicago and the village of Steuben in Wisconsin.



## The Beating Heart of O'Fallon Is Its High School Band

By Kristy Alpert

Along with the band director's fearless advocacy, the community started a nonprofit, which helped explore grants and sought creative ways to save the music.



## Joanne Aono's Farm Intertwines Nature and Art

By Eric Scott Fisher and Lydia Moran

Artist Joanne Aono relates working on her farm to her art-making practice: "oftentimes what you end up having isn't anything you planned on."



"Prairie Passage," from the "Harvesting Ethnic Roots" series by Joanne Aono from Morris, Illinois, as featured in her Creativity News Desk Midwest Makers video by Eric Scott Fisher.

# FY24 Grants Awarded

Grant Opportunity	Grantee or Awardee	City	Congressional District	Grant Amount
GIG Fund	Artspace 304	Carbondale	12	\$3,000
Creative Midwest Media Cohort	Barn Raiser	Chicago	7	\$15,000
GIG Fund	Black Alphabet NFP	Chicago	9	\$4,000
GIG Fund	Burst Into Books	Chicago	1	\$3,000
GIG Fund	Catfish Jazz Society	East Moline	17	\$2,500
GIG Fund	Centralia Cultural Society	Centralia	12	\$4,000
Shakespeare in American Communities	Chicago Shakespeare Theater	Chicago	7	\$25,000
GIG Fund	ChiMOP	Chicago	4	\$2,800
GIG Fund	Evanston Symphony Orchestra Association	Evanston	9	\$2,500
GIG Fund	Guarneri Hall NFP	Chicago	7	\$4,000
NEA Big Read	Hamilton Wings	Elgin	8	\$20,000
NEA Big Read	Illinois Humanities Council	Chicago	7	\$20,000
Jazz Road	Jim Gailloreto: Metropolitan Jazz Octet	Chicago	7	\$15,000
Jazz Road	Julian Quall with Mamey	Chicago	7	\$8,330
GIG Fund	KPAC	Skokie	3	\$4,000
Midwest Award for Artists with Disabilities	Matthew Bodett	Chicago	7	\$3,000
Jazz Road	Sam Thousand and the Soul Vortex	Chicago	7	\$11,307
Creative Midwest Media Cohort	Sixty Inches from Center	Chicago	7	\$15,000
GIG Fund	Still Inspired	Chicago	5	\$4,000
GIG Fund	Subtext Studio TC	Warrenville	11	\$4,000

# FY24 Grants Awarded

Grant Opportunity	Grantee or Awardee	City	Congressional District	Grant Amount
GIG Fund	The Wasteshed	Chicago	3	\$4,000
GIG Fund	UCIMC	Urbana	13	\$4,000
<b>22 Awardees</b>				<b>\$178,437</b>

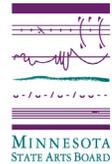
Arts Midwest leverages public and private dollars to bring services to Illinois.

<b>Grants + Programs</b>	<b>GIG Fund</b>	\$45,800
	<b>NEA Big Read</b>	\$40,000
	<b>Shakespeare in American Communities</b>	\$25,000
	<b>Midwest Award for Artists with Disabilities</b>	\$3,000
	<b>World Fest</b>	
	Programming Costs	\$61,407
	<b>Creativity News Desk</b>	
	Programming Costs	\$38,585
	Grants	\$30,000
	<b>National Leaders of Color Fellowship</b>	
	Programming Costs	\$2,113
	<b>Jazz Road</b>	
	Programming Costs	\$1,869
	Grants	\$34,637
<b>Services</b>	<b>SAA Summits</b>	\$2,793
	<b>Accessibility Support</b>	\$1,333
	<b>Total services and grants</b>	<b>\$286,537</b>
	<b>FY24 State Dues</b>	\$66,200
	<b>Services and grants in excess of dues</b>	\$220,337
	<b>Return on Investment</b>	<b>333%</b>

## National Endowment for the Arts



## State Arts Agencies



## Foundations, Corporations, and Other Government Funders



Arts Midwest's activities are made possible by a grant provided by the Minnesota State Arts Board through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature general fund.

## Thank You

If you have questions about the information in this report, or if you would like more information about Arts Midwest's programs and services, please contact:

**Anne Romens**

Vice President

[anne.romens@artsmidwest.org](mailto:anne.romens@artsmidwest.org)

Cover: Choreography accompanying Jennifer Cronin's visual art piece "There is Still Magic Here," presented by Still Inspired in Chicago, Illinois, supported by Arts Midwest's GIG Fund. Photo by Rhys Bakulinski.