

# Washington State Arts Commission Capacity Building / Federal Funding Project



## Federal Grant Opportunity Description

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### **PROJECT: National Endowment for the Arts' *Our Town* Grant**

More information: <http://arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/grant-program-description>

*ArtsWA seeks to identify a creative placemaking project idea within Washington State. This project requires 2 partners —1 non-profit and 1 local government entity—to collaborate on 1 project within 1 community. One of these partners will serve as the primary applicant. This document describes the criteria and goals for the Our Town grant itself. For more information about how to apply for the ArtsWA Capacity Building program, please refer to the Project Information and Application Guidelines document.*

**Summary of grant opportunity:** Through the *Our Town* grant program, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) will award grants for “creative placemaking” projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core. *Our Town* will invest in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, seek to:

- Improve their quality of life.
- Encourage greater creative activity.
- Foster stronger community identity and a sense of place.
- Revitalize economic development.

*Our Town* projects should represent the distinct character and quality of their communities and must reflect the following principles:

- A systemic approach to civic development and a persuasive vision for enhanced community livability.
- Clearly defined civic development goals and objectives that recognize and enhance the role that the arts and design play at the center of community life.
- An action plan aligned with the project vision and civic development goals.
- A funding plan that is appropriate, feasible, indicates strong and wide community support, and includes a well-conceived strategy for maintaining the work of the project.
- Artistic excellence of the design and/or arts organizations, designers, or artists involved with the project.

Projects may include arts engagement, cultural planning, and design activities such as:

### **Arts Engagement**

Arts engagement projects support artistically excellent artistic production or practice as the focus of creative placemaking work.

- Innovative programming that fosters interaction among community members, arts organizations, and artists, or activates existing cultural and community assets.
- Festivals and performances in spaces not normally used for such purposes.
- Public art that improves public spaces and strategically reflects or shapes the physical and social character of a community.

## Cultural Planning

Cultural planning projects support the development of artistically excellent local support systems necessary for creative placemaking to succeed.

- Creative asset mapping.
- Cultural district planning.
- The development of master plans or community-wide strategies for public art.
- Support for creative entrepreneurship.
- Creative industry cluster/hub development.

## Design

Design projects that demonstrate artistic excellence while supporting the development of environments where creative placemaking takes place, or where the identity of place is created or reinforced.

- Design of rehearsal, studio, or live/work spaces for artists.
- Design of cultural spaces – new or adaptive reuse.
- Design of public spaces, e.g., parks, plazas, landscapes, neighborhoods, districts, infrastructure, bridges, and artist-produced elements of streetscapes. Community engagement activities including design charrettes, design competitions, and community design workshops.

For *Our Town*, ArtsWA is looking to identify 2 partners (1 arts-focused non-profit and 1 local government unit) representing communities that can identify a clear need or problem (which has been articulated in public planning meetings or documented in neighborhood plans, for example) and that have engaged in some initial community discussions about solutions. ArtsWA cannot provide needs assessment support as part of this project; the applicant community should have already done that. ArtsWA's goal is to work with the community and the partnering organizations to take the NEXT steps, not the FIRST steps.

### Our Town Application Information:

- The deadline for the FY2015 **Our Town** grants is estimated to be January 13, 2015 (estimate is based on FY2014 grant schedule; FY2015 guidelines and deadline information have not yet been released).
- Earliest start date for project activities, based on the FY2014 schedule, will be September 1, 2015. Project activities may be carried out for up to 2 years.
- Awards range from \$25,000 to \$150,000.
- Non-federal 1:1 match is required.

### Eligibility Information:

- 2 primary partners are required (to work in partnership on 1 project): a **nonprofit organization** and a **local government entity**.
- At least 1 of the primary partners must be a cultural (arts or design) organization.
- Either of the primary partners can serve as the lead applicant.
- For organizations other than a local government, a public entity or nonprofit partner must be incorporated as **501c3 entities** at the time of the application and must be able to demonstrate a **three year history of programming** prior to the application deadline.

- Eligible local government partners include counties, parishes, cities, towns, villages, federally recognized tribal governments, local arts agencies, local education agencies (school districts), or local government-run community college.
- The highest ranking official of the local government is required to submit a formal endorsement letter designating the project as the only one being submitted for the local government.
- Additional partners beyond the two primary partners are encouraged. These may include a variety of entities such as state level government agencies, foundations, arts organizations and artists, nonprofit organizations, design professionals and design centers, educational institutions, real estate developers, business leaders, and community organizations, as well as public and governmental entities. Federal agencies cannot be monetary partners.

**Examples of funded projects:**

ArtsWA first launched the Capacity Building/Federal Funding Project in 2012 and selected **Tieton Arts & Humanities** in Tieton, Washington as the organization we would support in an application to the *Our Town* program. In 2013, Tieton Arts & Humanities was awarded \$50,000 by the NEA in support of the *Tieton Mosaic Project*, which includes mosaic installations, an artisan apprenticeship program, community engagement, and student workshops. Through this project, local residents will be selected and trained as apprentices to produce and install mosaic signs and designs on public buildings and civic spaces. The project will establish a bold visual identity for the city and an artisan training program for residents to acquire skills in mosaic making. Partners include the City of Tieton, Tieton Arts & Humanities, and Mighty Tieton. Tieton has a population of 1,191 people and 64 percent of residents are Hispanic.

Other projects recently funded through the *Our Town* program include:

**Springboard for the Arts,** St. Paul, MN

Amount: \$75,000

To support artist engagement, participatory public art programming, oral history interviews, and an exhibition in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Project activities will build on an important moment in the community as the citizens of Fergus Falls engage in a debate about the city's history and future. Much of this debate is centered around the Kirkbride, a historic property and cornerstone of the community that served as a state mental institution for over 100 years. Arts engagement activities will foster dialogue about historic preservation and economic improvement challenges with Kirkbride as its backdrop. Project partners include Springboard for the Arts, Fergus Falls Economic Improvement Commission, Kaddatz Gallery, Otter Tail County Historical Society, Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, and Place-Based Productions. As many as 50 artists and 2,000 community members will participate in project activities.

**Mainstreet Uptown Butte,** Butte, MT

Amount: \$150,000

To support cultural asset mapping, community planning to develop artist live/work spaces, and artist residencies. Building on the momentum and international recognition of the Montana Folk Festival, artist residencies and guest programming will activate the Mainstreet year-round with performances and installations. Partners including Mainstreet Uptown Butte, Butte-Silver Bow County, and Imagine Butte Collaborative will work together to assess existing cultural activity and the opportunity for artist live/work housing.

**City of Spartanburg, Spartanburg, SC**

Amount:\$25,000

To support an arts and cultural plan for Northside, a 350-acre neighborhood undergoing redevelopment in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Engagement and cultural planning activities with artists and arts organizations will complement other planning efforts, including a recently awarded U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development CHOICE Neighborhood Planning Grant, to ensure that arts planning is embedded in the redevelopment process for the neighborhood. Partners include HUB-BUB, Chapman Cultural Center, Mary Black Foundation, Northside Leadership Council, and City of Spartanburg. The plan will target Northside residents where the median family income is \$16,290, less than half of what residents earn nationwide.

**My Story, Portland, OR**

Amount \$25,000

To support a project that engages youth to capture and exhibit photographs that showcase the city's changing demographics. Through photography and related media training, youth will capture family portraits to be presented in a citywide series of interactive exhibits that challenge preconceptions about the city's demographics, and visually present the faces and stories of a changing Portland. Coinciding with the adoption of the 2035 Portland Plan, We are Portland will engage minority and immigrant populations in planning for the city's future, helping to address socio-economic, racial, and ethnic inequalities that exist today. The project will include six youth arts workshops, engaging 90 underserved youth to study photography and related media, and capture the stories of more than 180 underserved Portland families.