



## **2026 OPEN CALL APPLICATION PACKET: SHANTY ARTISTS**

*shanty types, guidelines & considerations, evaluation criteria, tips, application questions*

**Deadline for applications: 11:59pm CST - Thursday, July 24, 2025**

**For more information on our 2026 program**, including eligibility, detailed timeline, compensation and FAQ's, please review the open call page on our website:

<https://artshantyprojects.org/2026-call-for-shanty-artists/>

### **2026 SHANTY TYPES**

#### **Classic shanties:**

- Artists can welcome visitors inside, yay!
- Artists are required to also activate the exterior in a meaningful way related to their shanty concept, theme or activities. This requirement supports our accessibility plan, reduces waiting in lines, and creates a vibrant village at every turn.
- These keep you and visitors warm :)

#### **Open Shanties:**

- Wanna keep it super outdoorsy? No problem! Artists can design shanties for an exterior experience for visitors.
- In this scenario, artists can be outside OR inside.

### **2026 SHANTY DESIGN GUIDELINES & CONSIDERATIONS**

Artists should take the following guidelines into consideration when designing or developing an idea to submit a successful proposal. All selected artists will receive consultation and resources for best practices from staff and past shanty artists to ensure a successful project. We don't want you to learn the hard way as others before you did!

#### **1. Environment**

- The design of the project should take the environment and variable winter weather conditions into consideration, including wind, snow, extreme cold, rain, warming temperatures, etc. in relation to their project structures/elements/activities and their own bodies.
- Generators are not allowed at any time. We recommend using the principle of "low tech, high impact" to creatively make your project work, which may involve employing people power (think: bike-generated contraptions, manual levers or cranks, etc.). If the project requires other types of power, options include solar power, deep cycle batteries, and renewable methods for charging. Note that these options may not work perfectly in extremely cold weather conditions.

- Prioritize, whenever possible, using repurposed materials (which are more sustainable, and also less expensive). Also consider the future life of your materials (can they be repurposed again or recycled?). What is the afterlife of your shanty?
- Consider the environmental impact of any heating sources you choose to use. For (artist-only) interior spaces we highly recommend passive solar (like a greenhouse!) as a no-fuel option. For both outdoors and indoors, physical activity is also a great option! Interior propane heaters that are UL or CE rated (“Little Buddy” or similar) are allowed, as are interior wood-burning stoves. If you have an interior heating source, you must regularly clear snow off your roof. When snow melts in one place and drips it bores holes into the ice that become a safety hazard for you and for visitors. Due to logistics and air quality concerns, outdoor public-facing fire pits may not be allowed. We will assess on a case-by-case basis in winter - do not propose projects that depend on this.
- We welcome projects that include sound elements, and will work to place chosen projects in appropriate places, but ask that artists respect neighboring projects.

## **2. Structure**

- Elaborate set-up is not recommended. Design pre-assembly into planning as much as possible. Examples: some shanties are designed to be built and moved intact on a trailer; others are built as panels with pre-drilled holes for bolts. It’s not a simple task to assemble things on a windy, cold, frozen lake while wearing mittens!
- The lake sees intense winds which places incredible strain and wear on structures. Big flat standalone walls/structures turn into sails. Design your project to minimize the chance of materials falling off, blowing away, and being scattered as litter and/or frozen into the ice.
- We can provide a few sandbags for artists to weigh projects down if needed, but sandbags should not be considered a solution for structural integrity
- The project should be designed to be physically accessible to people interacting at different heights (adults, children, people riding kicksleds, etc). If there is an elevated platform for participants, you will be required to have a ramp and/or supportive railing. We will review more specific requirements with selected artists.

## **3. Safety**

- The Minnesota DNR requires two things of shanty artists: an Ice Shelter License (FKA Dark House Permit), and reflective material must be placed on all sides of the shanty for nighttime safety (when the village is not active). This can be silver paint or tape, reflectors, or other highly shiny objects. You can work it into your project aesthetics/design! There are nominal costs associated with these items (see budget section below).
- There are certain things that are not allowed for safety reasons, including: ice carousels, holes cut into the ice for swimming, tents or fabric shelters that need to be staked into the ice and/or that can easily catch wind and blow away, etc. If you are unsure about your proposed activity, please contact us with questions before submitting it.

## **4. Movability**

REQUIREMENTS IN RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE: We challenge our community to make shanties easier to move as we face the increasing risk of melting ice due to climate change!

While ASP will provide a skidloader during installation and deinstallation weekends to move shanties across the ice, please propose a structure that can be adjusted quickly in melting and refreezing conditions and that can be moved easily on and off the ice (300' or more, and up a boat ramp), intact, at short notice, should the ice become unsafe. If we install a Plan Beach situation, the skidloader will NOT be available to move things across the park. **When assessing movability, consider these requirements:**

- Incorporating two long wooden skis / runners into the design (usually made of 2x6 or 2x10 lumber)
- The ability to be quickly moved by people power, at short notice, in unsafe conditions (i.e. just the people in your own team)
- Weight - nothing more than 1500 lbs, less is probably better. For reference, the average car weighs 4000 lbs, a grand piano weighs 1000 lbs, a snowmobile weighs 500 lbs. If selected we will provide a materials weight calculator to help you plan
- Size/shape - nothing too unwieldy, such as shanties with a large structural footprint (20' x 20') or sprawling footprint or structures that are extremely tall throughout

## **5. Community**

- Our festival is open to all ages and abilities. Elements should be appealing to and appropriate for adults, some of whom might be looking after children. Your project should engage them in direct, participatory ways.
- Collaboration is key! When building, installing, and de-installing, there are many physical and logistical challenges that are much easier when working with others. We recommend teams of 4 or more. We do not accept proposals from 'teams' of 1. One thing we learned from COVID is that having extra people to step in if someone gets sick is critical!
- All artists, staff, board members and volunteers will sign a community agreement, which is intended to support an inclusive space. It includes a commitment to respecting pronouns, using gender neutral language with strangers, getting consent to take photos, holding ourselves accountable to one another when we cause or witness harm, masking in back of house spaces during infectious disease outbreaks, etc.

**An acknowledgement of specific design requirements appears in the application questions below.**

## **2026 EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Applications will be reviewed by a panel led by the Artistic Director which consists of an Art Shanty Projects board member representative, local artists, curators, and past participants.

**Project proposals are evaluated based on three categories (all equally important!):**

- **Artistic merit** - do the artists propose an exciting idea with adherence to Art Shanty Projects artistic goals and with a sound plan for audience engagement? Applications are scored based on five questions, each corresponding to a stated artistic goal.

- **Feasibility** - do the artists demonstrate their team capacity to design, build and staff the project in our unique, populated, winter weather context? Applications are scored based on questions related to team skills, experience/interaction design, assessment of unresolved items, budget
- **Supporting materials** - do artists illustrate their written sections related to artistic merit and feasibility? Jurors also look for evidence of adherence to requirements such as ramps and skis, accessibility considerations, structural integrity in the outdoor environment, and feasibility / ability to create the project

## **TIPS FOR A STRONG PROPOSAL**

- Jurors read a lot of proposals. Help them out by answering each question directly and plainly.
- Do not assume jury members know you or are familiar with your work. Make sure if you reference past projects (even if they're Art Shanty projects), you include them in your work samples.
- If you're proposing a remount of a past project, do not assume that just because you have done your project before, it will get chosen again. Make a strong case for it! Make sure it adapts to the current guidelines! Include documentation of it! Jurors may not have experienced it.
- Include supporting materials (renderings, relevant video or audio samples or past work) to further illustrate your proposal to the jurors, and give them an understanding of your aesthetic, vision, and ability to carry out your proposed project.
- Share a draft of your written proposal with someone else to read. Ask them to verbally describe your project back to you. This might help identify what is clear, and what needs more definition.

## **2026 APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

### **BASIC INFORMATION**

*Proposed shanty name (**short answer**)*

*Brief shanty concept (**short answer, 1-2 sentence synopsis**)*

*What type of shanty are you proposing? (**select one**)*

*'Classic' shanties have an enclosed interior experience that welcomes visitors inside.*

*'Open' shanties do NOT have an enclosed space shared with visitors (see more details on our website for definitions)*

- ★ **CLASSIC** (fully enclosed space with a complementary exterior experience, as required)
- ★ **OPEN** (visitors cannot come inside and share space)

*Will this be a NEW shanty or the remounting of a PAST shanty? (**select one**)*

*NOTE: There is a difference in stipends awarded to new shanties (\$2500) and the remounting of past shanties (\$2000). This is done with the reasoning that returning shanties have fewer material costs in a remount.*

*If you have questions on this, please refer to our website which gives full details on the reasoning behind this, and/or send an email to [program@artshantyprojects.org](mailto:program@artshantyprojects.org).*

- ★ *It's new! We've never done this project before*
- ★ *We're excited to bring back a shanty we've done before!*

Primary Contact Name **(short answer)**

Primary Contact Pronouns **(select all that apply)**

Primary Contact Cell Phone **(short answer)**

Primary Contact Email **(short answer)**

Who else is on your team? **(short answer)**

*Please list any individual or group names that are confirmed. Reminder: shanty teams of 'one' are not eligible*

## **PROJECT DESIGN REQUIREMENTS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We love winter! We love nature! We love engaging with all kinds of people!

We want everyone - artists included - to have a good time. Our design requirements uphold our values and help artist projects succeed in our exhilarating conditions.

Consider: Operating outdoors in winter on a frozen lake is a challenging and rewarding endeavor. Climate change forces us to be flexible and respond quickly. We respect the indigenous water we're operating on and agree to leave no trace. Engaging with large crowds of varying abilities requires proactive attention to accessibility and engagement design.

We require that all shanties:

- are able to withstand variable conditions including wind, rain, snow, melting, refreezing, and subzero temps
- leave no trace and are not made of materials that will easily shed or cause trash on the lake (ex. hard plastics become brittle in cold weather! We don't allow astroturf for this reason...)
- are able to moved by people power if necessary. This means adhering to the 1500 lb. weight limit and the requirement to build your shanty on wooden 'skis' that allow it to slide. And being ready to move, if necessary
- are able to operate on land, if necessary ("Plan Beach")
- have a meaningful exterior experience (whether projects are 'classic' and people go inside, or are 'open air' and nobody goes inside)
- incorporate accessibility into their design, including that they have a ramp if the public is invited onto raised platforms above the ice surface (does not need to be ADA 12:1, staff will support artists in this)

If your project is selected our staff will work with you on these, and share tips and best practices for our unique context.

*Please acknowledge that you will respect these requirements and be ready to take action if necessary*  
**(select one):**

- ★ *I acknowledge these requirements, and don't have any questions / don't need support on this. I'll be ready!*
- ★ *I acknowledge these requirements, but have questions on best practices, should I get accepted. I might need some support!*

## **PART I: ARTISTIC MERIT**

Tell us all about the shanty you would like to create! **Each question in this section below corresponds to one of our five artistic goals.**

### **Artistic Goals:**

1. Projects should contribute to creating a vibrant village, with a balance of both bold and intimate structures and activities. Shanties should be visually appealing, collectively enough to draw participants across the ice from the shore to our village. Performances and art actions should add to the atmosphere of the village and encourage people to linger.
2. We are intentionally creating a temporary village and social community. Projects should encourage active co-creation with a wide array of participants, including other artists, visitors, volunteers, staff, or the occasional non-human animal.
3. Projects should engage multiple senses to maximize participation in an effort to creatively remove barriers due to language, mobility, hearing, sight or otherwise.
4. We are operating on Indigenous water and have a responsibility to help protect it. Projects should respect and engage with the natural environment of the frozen lake and engage in sustainable practices and choices, whenever possible. We have a 'leave no trace' philosophy, only footsteps should be left behind.
5. The festival aims to engage with a wide array of artistic and cultural perspectives, being mindful of intersections of race, class, gender, age, ability, etc. Artists should not appropriate other cultures in their work, but instead focus on creating projects that invite exchange with their own personal culture, practices, process, perspective, etc.

**Question 1:** *Describe what your shanty looks like! Include things like size, shape, colors, textures, materials, other attractive features, etc. NOTE: you are required to also attach a visual rendering in your work samples. (limit 1000 characters)*

**Question 2:** *Describe how your project contributes to the social community of the village. What interaction or activities will take place? What will a visitor to the shanty do, experience, or learn? If you are proposing a CLASSIC shanty, make sure to articulate both the interior and exterior experience. What is your interest in engaging with the public? (limit 1000 characters)*

**Question 3:** *How will your project engage many ways of experiencing the world, beyond visual? (sound, touch, smell, etc). What elements of your project will be especially engaging for people of various ages, who speak different languages, and/or have limited mobility, hearing, or sight? (limit 800 characters)*

**Question 4:** Describe how your project relates to, interacts with, and/or respects the frozen lake and being outside in winter. This might be in relation to thematic content, connection to place or context, sustainable material choices, etc. Why do you want to do this project, here, in this context? **(limit 600 characters)**

**Question 5:** What personal cultures, practices, movements or perspectives is your project rooted in? (Examples: street art; DIY makers; Afrofuturism; eco-feminism; team sports; flow arts; puppetry; citizen science; etc). What excites you about sharing this with other people who may or may not be familiar with this? **(limit 600 characters)**

## **PART II: FEASIBILITY**

Address your ability to build your shanty and your capacity to staff the project in our unique, populated, winter weather context.

**Question 6:** What skills do the members of your group have (or are eager to learn) that will contribute to the team's ability to build and staff your project? This could relate to generating conceptual ideas, designing and/or building activities and structures, enthusiasm for engaging with the public, etc. **(limit 1000 characters)**

**Question 7:** With the potential of thousands of visitors per day, how will the interactive aspect of your shanty accommodate the potential flow of traffic and handle lines and crowds, in an engaging way? Think about the experience of an audience member from afar, approaching your shanty, potentially waiting in line, and directly experiencing it. **(limit 600 characters)**

**Question 8:** What is still unresolved for you at this time (regarding project design, materials, audience engagement, feasibility, or otherwise)? What resources do you have in place to resolve those things? What help or expertise do you need? **(limit 800 characters)**

## **Budget**

**NEW shanty projects** are given a stipend of \$2500.

**RETURNING shanty projects** are given a stipend of \$2000.

Artist teams can choose how to spend this money. It's OK if this budget breakdown changes later; this is just an estimate so jurors can help assess whether your plan is reasonable. If you are accepted, you will manage your own budget and you do not need to report actual costs post-program.

We recommend reserving a small portion of your money for 'contingency' (i.e. unexpected expenses that may come up).

Your total budget should add up to the \$2500 stipend for new shanties / \$2000 stipend for returning shanties offered by Art Shanty Projects unless you have funding from another source (and in that case, please list it).

If your budget totals more than \$2500 (new projects) / \$2000 (returning projects), please list where you intend to get the additional funds for your project, and whether those sources are confirmed or pending.

Consider in-kind goods or services when making your budget (i.e. what are you getting for free?!).

List the expense for each of the following categories (**all short answer**):

*It's OK to list "\$0" if you don't plan to spend money in any particular category.*

*Materials (building materials, costumes, props, etc)*

*Equipment (anything you need to rent or purchase)*

*Transportation (rental trucks, gas, etc)*

*Stipends (for artists or collaborators)*

*Space Rental (if you are renting a space in which to build your project)*

*Ice Shelter License (FKA "Dark House Permit") Required - currently the DNR lists this at \$15*

*Other (please define)*

*Contingency (money held for unexpected expenses)*

**TOTAL budget (short answer)**

*(add everything up from above)*

*If your budget totals more than \$2500 (new projects) / \$2000 (returning projects), please list where you intend to get the additional funds for your project, and whether those sources are confirmed or pending. (short answer)*

*List any in-kind goods or services you expect to receive (things you're getting for free!) (short answer)*

### **PART III: SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

Illustrate your plans! Include anything that will help the jury understand your concept, design, structure, and audience engagement plan, as well as your ability to do this project (past related work samples). REMINDER: Jurors may not be familiar with your work - even if you're a returning shanty artist - so this section is very important.

Required materials include:

visual rendering(s) of your proposed shanty or activities (VERY IMPORTANT)  
and/or, past documentation of your project if it's a remount from shanties or elsewhere

Suggested materials include:

- past work samples that demonstrate your ability to make this project or that are related to this proposal



- related work samples that demonstrate elements of your project (ex. audio recording if your shanty features your own music; image of a craft if you're proposing making it with others; etc)
- reference materials that you're drawing inspiration from (PLEASE INDICATE that these are not your own works in this instance)

Submit up to five samples -- photos, illustrations, short videos that document or explain your project, audio, etc.

Please keep images under 2MB and audio/video clips 45 seconds or less.

**UPLOAD supporting materials (up to 5)**

*Please keep images under 2MB and audio/video clips 45 seconds or less.*

*Please label each sample with primary contact last name and work sample number followed by the Art Shanty year code. Example: Jones1\_ASP2026, Jones2\_ASP2026, etc.*

*List title, date, medium and description for each sample provided. (all short answer)*

*SAMPLE 1 - RENDERING of your project: title, date, medium and description*

*SAMPLE 2: title, date, medium and description*

*SAMPLE 3: title, date, medium and description*

*SAMPLE 4: title, date, medium and description*

*SAMPLE 5: title, date, medium and description*

**ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) OPPORTUNITIES:**

1. Mentorship
2. East Lake Cultural District outreach project

**MENTORSHIP**

Art Shanty Projects informally fosters a co-learning community that is committed to sharing skills and resources between artists! We also have a formal mentorship program that pairs seasoned shanty artists with newer folks wanting support on specific skills and best practices in our unique context. Last year topics of mentor/mentee pairings included honing design & construction skills, developing audience engagement plans, understanding how the cold impacts materials and equipment, and translating scientific information to artistic experiences.

We have capacity to select up to 6 pairs of mentors/mentees. Let us know below if you're interested! Indicating interest in this program does not guarantee you will be paired.

Mentorship pairs will have an initial meeting with ASP staff to review guidelines and expectations, and will then work on their own throughout the production process. They will have a final group debrief meeting post-program.

Mentors are expected to work no more than 12 hours with their mentee group, and will be compensated with a stipend of \$300.

Would you (or someone on your shanty team) like to be considered as a **mentor** in this program? If yes, please list team members name(s) and email(s) who are interested.

Eligibility requirement: mentors need to be returning, seasoned shanty artists (**short answer**)

Would your group like to be considered as a **mentee** in this program? (**choose one**)

While we focus on new shanty artists, returning artists who want to learn a specific skill are welcome to participate as well!

★ Yes

★ No

## **EAST LAKE CULTURAL DISTRICT OPPORTUNITY**

This year we received a Cultural District Arts Fund grant from the City of Minneapolis Department of Arts & Cultural Affairs to do outreach and community builds in the East Lake Cultural District. **The geographic bounds of East Lake Cultural District include** Pillsbury Ave on the west to Cedar Ave on the east, and can extend a 5 block radius in any direction (N-S-E-W).

**If you are an artist who lives, works, or is deeply connected to this district, you're eligible for additional funding** to host community builds in support of your shanty! This includes an additional **\$500** for outreach work (connecting with community, inviting people in, hosting two or more community builds) and some funds to defray costs related to build space rental in the neighborhood.

If you have questions about this, please reach out to [program@artshantyprojects.org](mailto:program@artshantyprojects.org)

Do you live, work, or have deep roots in the East Lake Cultural District? (**select all that apply**)

The geographic bounds of East Lake Cultural District include Pillsbury Ave on the west to Cedar Ave on the east, and can extend a 5 block radius in any direction (N-S-E-W).

★ Yes, I live there

★ Yes, I work there

★ Yes, I have additional roots there

★ No, I don't (this opportunity isn't for me)

If you checked YES to any of the above - and are interested in being considered for additional funding to participate in outreach and to host 2 or more community builds - please elaborate on your relationship with the East Lake Cultural District and your experience with community engagement, if any. (**limit 800 characters**)

## **THANK YOU!**

We look forward to reading your ideas towards making a vibrant shanty village. You can expect to hear back from us by August 31.

**In the meantime SAVE THESE REQUIRED DATES in the event your project is selected:**

**September 24, 2025:** all artist meeting 6-8pm IN PERSON (location TBD in S Mpls) - at least one member of your group is required to attend, more are welcome!

**January 7, 2026:** all-artist check-in meeting, 6-8pm IN PERSON (location TBD in Mpls) - at least one member of your group is required to attend, more are welcome!

**January 10-11, 2026:** artist installation weekend (you will be assigned a time slot)

**January 17 - February 8, 2026:** Program Dates, Saturdays and Sundays, 10am-4pm

**February 14-15, 2026:** artist strike (you will be assigned a time slot)

### **FUNDER CREDITS**

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

It is supported, in part, by the City of Minneapolis Department of Arts & Cultural Affairs.

### **[APPLICATION FORM](#)**