



2026 OPEN CALL APPLICATION PACKET: PERFORMANCES + ART ACTIONS

performance spaces, 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-performances-art-actions/>

2026 PERFORMANCE SPACES:

1. **The town square** - this is a large open space in the middle of the village. It is surrounded by shanties and is a hub of activity. It's ideal for performances that can handle a bit of mild chaos (examples of projects that did well here [a participatory flash mob](#), [a game of trash-ket ball](#)).
2. **At our performance stage!** This open-air platform provides a landing spot for more presentational performances. If you need a grounding space for your performance, it's a good option for you. (examples of past projects that have done well here: [choirs](#), [music groups](#). [This is our stage!](#))
3. **Pathways and in-between spaces** - performing anywhere in and around plowed paths and areas between shanties in the village. Roving projects are ideal for these spaces. (examples of past projects that have done well here: [Winter Plein Air Painters](#), [Ladies of the Lost Continent](#), [Mr. Shim on Ice](#), [Lady Bear](#))
4. **In another open space, tbd** - there are always some projects that have specific needs, which we will do our best to accommodate! (examples include [B-Icicle Races](#) and [Native lacrosse](#))

Depending on weather conditions projects may be required to perform on shore if the ice conditions are not safe.

2026 PERFORMANCE 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.

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. Also consider the future life of your materials (can they be repurposed / recycled / composted?)
- 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. Set-up - for projects that contain physical elements only (may not apply to all projects)

- Elaborate set-up is not recommended. Design pre-assembly into planning as much as possible. It’s not a simple task to assemble things on a windy, cold, frozen lake while wearing mittens! If you have lots of materials to use, plan on making them easily transportable via sled.
- The lake sees intense winds which places incredible strain and wear on structures (and costumes!). Design your project elements 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 to stability or structural integrity
- The project should be designed to be physically accessible to people interacting at different heights (adults, children, people in wheelchairs, etc), which may include designing interactive elements at various levels, having a ramp incorporated into your structure, etc. We will review specific requirements with selected artists.

3. Safety

- There are certain things that are not allowed for safety reasons, including: ice carousels, holes cut into the ice for swimming, etc. If you are unsure about your proposed activity, please contact us with questions before submitting it.
- Temporary daytime use of tents or fabric shelters is allowed, as long as structures are secured by drilling stakes into the ice or otherwise.

4. Logistics

- To ensure the successful scheduling and placement of your project amid a vibrant festival, we will need to understand your site parameters, project duration, and the number of times you plan to enact it. We’d like a general idea of these in your proposal, but this can develop and be refined after acceptance.

4. 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 people in direct, participatory ways.
- 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.

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, create and staff the project in our unique, populated, winter weather context? Applications are scored based on team, production/technical design, experience/interaction design, climate contingencies, 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 feasibility and the applicant's 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.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

BASIC INFORMATION

Proposed project name (short answer)

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

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.

Where in the village would you ideally enact your project? **(Select all that apply):**

We will take this into consideration as we curate the festival as a whole, making sure to balance the areas activated. We cannot guarantee you'll get your first choice.

- ★ In the Town Square (best suited for projects that can operate in gathering spaces and with a mild amount of chaos)
- ★ At the Performance Stage (best suited for larger / louder / bolder projects)
- ★ In pathways / in-between spaces (roving or situated there)
- ★ I have other needs (which I will describe below)
- ★ I'm flexible / open to direction on this

If you selected "I have other needs," please describe what kind of space would suit you best. **(short answer)**

In your ideal world, how many times would you do your activity? **(dropdown, 1-8 times)**

If it's more than once, do you want to do it **(select all that apply):**

- ★ all on the same day
- ★ over multiple days
- ★ I'm flexible

What is the length of each engagement (ex. 2 hours, 4 hours, all day/6 hours) **(short answer)**

Do you have any other notes on the frequency, duration or timing of your project? **(short answer)**

Please note that staff curates the performance schedule considering the needs and requests of ALL groups - and we cannot guarantee specific dates or times but we will take them into consideration and work with all accepted artists to create a schedule that works for everyone!

PART I: ARTISTIC MERIT

Tell us all about the project 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: *Tell us about your project! What will your performance or art action entail? How does it contribute to creating the atmosphere of a social village? (limit 1000 characters)*

Question 2: *Describe how your project contributes to the interactive social community of the village. What is your experience with or interest in engaging with the public? How will you facilitate co-creation through this project? What will a visitor to the project do, experience, or learn? (limit 1000 characters)*

Question 3: *How will your project engage many ways of experiencing the world? (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) (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 rehearse and complete the performance, and to enact it in our unique context.

Question 6: *What skills do you and your collaborators have (or are eager to learn) that will contribute to the team's ability to rehearse and perform your project? This could relate to generating conceptual ideas, planning and rehearsing activities, enthusiasm for engaging with the public, etc. (limit 1000 characters)*

Question 7: What are your production and/or technical needs? Please share how you plan to make your project happen, given the guidelines, challenges and opportunities of our location / context. NOTE: we do not have power, and generators are not allowed. See website for more details on how artists have powered projects in the past **(limit 800 characters)**

Question 8: With the potential of thousands of visitors per day, how will the interactive aspect of your project accommodate the potential flow of traffic and handle potential crowds? **(limit 600 characters)**

Question 9: Can your project happen on land in the event that the ice is unsafe? What adjustments would need to be made in this scenario to make it work (if any) on land? Even if we're on ice, what adjustments would need to be made to make it work (if any) in warm/melty conditions? **(limit 600 characters)**

Question 10: What is still unresolved for you at this time? What resources do you have in place to resolve those things? What help or expertise do you need? **(limit 800 characters)**

Budget

Stipends for Performances + Art Actions are on a sliding scale up to \$1000.

Performers 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 not exceed \$1000, the maximum amount Art Shanty Projects is offering, unless you have funding from another source (and in that case, please list it).

We ask artists to request an amount that makes sense for their project. We recommend considering the number of performances you plan to do, duration, size of your group, material costs, etc when determining your request. **Some suggested guidelines include:**

- \$1000 - an activity that lasts an entire day, two half days, or shorter durations each weekend or each day. Larger groups or more ambitious projects, production-wise
- \$500 - an activity that lasts a half day, or for two shorter periods over a few days.
- \$250 - activities that are short or only happen only once; smaller groups or solo activities; low-tech/low-production projects

*How much are you requesting, in total, for this activity? **(short answer):***

Stipends are scalable: \$100-\$1000

*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 (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 rehearsal space or studio)

Other (list \$ amount and please define the expense)

Contingency (money held for unexpected expenses)

TOTAL budget:

(add everything up from above)

If your budget totals more than \$1000 (the max stipend we offer), please list where you intend to get the additional funds for your project, and whether those sources are confirmed or pending.

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

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, so this section is very important.**

Suggested materials include:

- Documentation of a past iteration of this project, if it's a remount or you've done it before somewhere else (video, audio, photos)
- past work samples that demonstrate your ability to make this project or that demonstrate elements of your project (ex. audio or video recording if your project contains music; video if your project includes dance; etc)
- visual renderings or photos of your proposed activities / project elements (costumes, physical elements, 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.

List title, date, medium and description for each sample provided.

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 - 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

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 25, 2025 (UPDATED DATE & LOCATION): all artist meeting 6-8pm IN PERSON at American Swedish Institute, 2600 Park Ave, 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 17 - February 8, 2026: Program Dates, Saturdays and Sundays, 10am-4pm (performer schedule to be confirmed in November)

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