



Application

Georgia Council for the Arts + Springboard for the Arts: 2026 Red Clay Creative Cohort

Application Deadline: April 28, 2026

Program Overview

Georgia Council for the Arts is inviting five communities to participate in the 2026 Red Clay Creative Cohort (RC3), a new program that puts creative people at the center of community life. Selected communities will send a team to a shared convening in Macon in June, then return home with funding and support to put what they learned into practice.

Each participating community receives \$20,000 to fund a set of creative, community-led projects with planning and implementation support from Springboard for the Arts through October 2026. Communities will also be connected to a statewide peer network of communities engaged in similar initiatives and hands-on training in how to find, hire, and partner with local creatives in ways that create lasting positive impact.

The Cohort kickoff meeting takes place June 1-2, 2026, in Macon, Georgia. Ten to 15 people from each community will spend a day and a half learning together, planning together, and meeting their counterparts from across the state. The sessions will be facilitated by Springboard for the Arts, a national leader in artist-centered community development based in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Each community will receive \$5,000 for travel and stipends.

We use the broadest possible definition of artist. Gallery artists and muralists, yes, but also choir members, spoon carvers, storytellers, hair stylists, home cooks, dancers, poets, and anyone who considers themselves creative. If you make things, tell stories, or use creativity to connect with people around you, this is for you.

We are also looking for active, engaged community members who know their community and want to see it thrive, including, but not limited to, local officials or their staff, Main Street and downtown managers, library directors, faith leaders, neighborhood association members, coffee shop owners, and school principals. No prior experience with arts programming is required.

Have questions? Please contact Georgia Council for the Arts Rural and Community Programs Manager Tyrone Webb at twebb@gaarts.org

Artists Working in Community Framework

This framework highlights the importance of collaboration between artists, local/state governments, and civic organizations to create lasting change. This opportunity also provides practical tools, stories, and strategies, offering guidance on:

- Building trust and relationships within communities.
- Navigating challenges and conflicts.
- Designing projects that are sustainable and impactful.
- Reflecting on the social and cultural impact of artistic work.

What Selected Communities Will Receive

Participating communities will:

- Receive funding (up to **\$20,000**) to support local, artist-led public art or creative placemaking projects, plus an additional \$5,000 to cover travel expenses and stipends for participants.
- Send a team of **10-15 community members** (including artists, local leaders, and cross-sector partners) to a **1.5-day, in-person Cohort kickoff in Macon, Georgia (June 2026)**.
- Participate in **hands-on workshops and project planning sessions** led by national facilitators.
- Build connections with peer communities across Georgia.
- Receive **training, tools, and ongoing support** from Springboard for the Arts and Georgia Council for the Arts.
- Develop local leadership through a **train-the-trainer model** to sustain this work beyond the program.

Program Timeline

- **April 28, 2026** – Application deadline
- **May 4, 2026** – Communities notified
- **May 12, 2026, at 2 p.m.** – Virtual orientation and community preparation
- **June 1-2, 2026** – 1.5-day Cohort kickoff meeting in Macon, GA
- **June-October 2026** – Community project implementation
- **October 1, 2026** – All projects completed
- **October 2026** – Virtual debrief and impact reflection

Program Goal

The goal of this initiative is to **increase organizational and community capacity** to plan and implement public art and creative placemaking projects. By centering artists as leaders and collaborators, communities will explore how creative approaches can:

- Activate public spaces.
- Strengthen local identity and storytelling.
- Expand access to arts and culture.
- Support economic vitality and community well-being.

This opportunity is ideal for communities ready to **collaborate, learn, and take action** through meaningful, artist-driven projects.

Apply Now: <https://www.cognitofrms.com/GDECD1/RedClayCreativeCohortApplication>

Applications require the following information prior to submission:

1. Organization Name
2. Organization Type (select one):
 - Nonprofit Organization
 - Municipality / City Government
 - County Government
 - Public School / College / University
 - Library
 - Other Public Entity
3. Primary Contact Name
4. Title
5. Email Address
6. Phone Number
7. **Organization Address**
 - Street Address
 - City
 - County
 - ZIP Code

Each selected community will recruit **10 to 15 participants before the 2026 Cohort kickoff in Macon, with at least 50% of participants being artists/creatives**. If the entire team is not yet complete by April 28, at least five participants must be included in the application.

- List the confirmed members of your team and the sectors represented: (*e.g., artists, local government, nonprofits, business owners, educators, youth leaders*)
- Describe your plan to engage and recruit a diverse group of artists and team members.
- List additional key personnel or partners (organizations, agencies, etc.), and describe their role in putting together the team and in future arts projects.
- Why is your community interested in participating in this creative placemaking program? How will participation benefit your community?
- Confirm your ability to:
 - Attend the **1.5-day 2026 Cohort kickoff in Macon (June 1-2, 2026)** (Yes/No)
 - Participate in virtual pre-meetings and trainings (Yes/No)
 - Engage in ongoing check-ins from June through October 2026 (Yes/No)
- Describe your organization's capacity to manage and support community-based projects between June and October 31, 2026. Include any experience with public art or placemaking projects.

- How will you ensure that all segments of your community will be involved in project planning?

By submitting this application, the organization confirms:

- Ability to complete projects by **October 31, 2026.**
- Commitment to participate in all required program activities.
- Accuracy of all information provided.

Optional Attachments

- Letters of support
 - Artist bios or resumes
 - Work samples
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Evaluation

Reviewers will use the following criteria to evaluate the applications:

- Does the applicant have a plan to engage and recruit a diverse group of artists and team members? (20 points)
- Does the applicant have key personnel and partners that will help put together the team and lead future art projects? (20 points)
- Does the community have a strong interest in participating in the program, and will participation benefit their community? (20 points)
- Does the organization have the capacity to manage successful community arts projects? (20 points)
- Does the applicant have a strong plan to ensure that all segments of their community will be involved in project planning? (20 points)