



AGENDA

**City Council Work Session
Monday, October 26, 2026
Council Chambers
(following the Regular Meeting at 6 p.m.)**

1. Community Partnership Annual Reports from:
 - Southern MN Initiative Foundation
 - Greater Mankato Diversity Council
 - Twin Rivers Council for the Arts
2. 2027 Legislative Priorities.
3. Budget: General Fund & Special Revenue Fund
4. Adjournment



SOUTHERN MINNESOTA
INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

525 Florence Avenue • PO Box 695 • Owatonna, MN 55060-0695
PH 507.455.3215 • FAX 507.455.2098 • smifoundation.org

April 2026

Susan Arntz
City of Mankato
10 Civic Center Plz
PO Box 3368
Mankato, MN 56002-3368

Dear Ms. Arntz and City Council,

As Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) marks 40 years of service to southern Minnesota, we reflect on a legacy rooted in economic resilience and regional growth. Since our founding in 1986 in response to the farm crisis, SMIF has reinvested more than \$178 million to strengthen the region's economic vitality.

Economic development is central to SMIF's mission. Strong local economies depend on thriving small businesses, an adaptable workforce and communities equipped to support both. From main streets in towns like Truman to close-knit communities like Harmony, local leadership and strategic investment are essential to sustaining long-term resilience.

SMIF partners with communities to drive this work. Through lending and technical assistance, we support entrepreneurs and small business owners as they start, expand and adapt. Our long-term impact is sustained through endowed funds that provide a stable foundation for continued investment. Our General Endowment and Entrepreneur Fund offer stability and fuel business growth by offering flexible financing and support to help enterprises remain rooted in the region.

Partnership with city and county governments is essential. Your leadership helps create the conditions where businesses succeed, talent grows and communities remain vibrant places to live and work. See the enclosed fact sheet for recent SMIF activity in your county.

Thank you for your last donation of \$10,000.00 on 1/27/2026. With your last gift, SMIF was able to leverage an extra \$14 into your county! We hope you will continue to support SMIF in 2027 to advance economic development across southern Minnesota. We are honored to work alongside you and look forward to building on this momentum in the years ahead.

With deep appreciation,

Benya Kraus
President & CEO

cc: Jamila Ibrahim, Board Member





1986 Honoring the Past, 2026
Building Tomorrow



2027 Funding Request: City of Mankato

2026 Operating Budget: \$8,609,090

Requested City of Mankato contribution: \$10,000



This year, SMIF proudly celebrates 40 years of serving southern Minnesota. During that time, we have invested more than \$178 million throughout the region, including \$24.2 million in Blue Earth County alone. Alongside these investments, SMIF has built strong relationships and lasting partnerships that continue to strengthen our communities.



In the past two years alone, SMIF has invested more than \$1.3 million back into Blue Earth County. For every dollar raised locally, SMIF reinvests \$14 into the communities we serve.



In the coming year, SMIF will continue advancing our strategic plan with a strong focus on creating meaningful impact in Mankato. Through our lending programs and technical assistance, we support local entrepreneurs and small businesses as they grow and succeed. We also invest in local child care professionals by providing access to free continuing education, credit-approved trainings and technical assistance.

In addition, SMIF supports Mankato through grantmaking initiatives that strengthen the region's economic vitality and quality of life. Our goal is to partner with the City of Mankato to ensure the community remains a vibrant, growing and thriving place to live, work and raise a family.

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation



Recent SMIF activity in Mankato

Early Childhood Support:

- Children's Museum S MN, Early Care & Education Grant, \$18,000
- YWCA Mankato, Early Care & Education Grant, \$10,000
- MVAC Head Start, Early Literacy Grant, 675 books (50 in Spanish) (\$13,500)
- MVAC, Early Care & Education Grant, \$20,000
- YWCA Mankato, Early Care & Education Grant, \$20,000
- Mankato Area Public Schools, Early Care & Education Grant, \$15,000
- Good Council Learning Center, Early Literacy Grant, 110 books (10 in Spanish) (\$2,200)
- Mankato Kiwanis Foundation, Early Literacy Grant, 4,100 books (100 in Spanish) (\$82,000)
- Mankato Area Public Schools Community Ed, Early Literacy Grant, 120 books (20 in Spanish) (\$2,400)
- MVAC, Early Literacy Grant, 425 books (25 in Spanish) (\$8,500)
- MN Council of Churches, Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Grant, \$50,000
- Mankato Area Public Schools, Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Grant, \$49,650
- Children's Museum S MN, Early Care & Education Grant, \$11,749
- Mankato Kiwanis Foundation, Early Literacy Grant, 4,000 books (\$80,000)
- Mankato Area Public Schools Community Ed, Early Literacy Grant, 225 books (25 in Spanish), \$4,500)
- MVAC, Early Literacy Grant, 550 books (50 in Spanish), \$11,000)
- Young Womens Christian Association of Mankato, Early Care & Education Grant, \$20,000
- Children's Museum S MN, Early Care & Education Grant, \$19,500
- Loyola Catholic School, Early Care & Education Grant, \$7,680
- Mankato Area Public Schools, Early Care & Education Grant, \$20,000
- YWCA, Early Care & Education Grant, \$20,000
- Children's Museum S MN, Early Care & Education Grant, \$19,500

Entrepreneur Support:

- MN Council of Churches Refugee Support, Inclusive & Equitable Grant, \$20,000
- Region Nine Development Commission, Inclusive & Equitable Grant, \$10,000
- Region Nine Development Commission, Grow a Farmer Grant, \$25,000
- Loan activity: Midwest Xpress LLC, Nick's Car Care, Medieval Metalwerx LLC, totaling \$95,000

Community Vitality:

- Mankato Area Public Schools, Paint the Town Grant, 6 gallons of paint



Southern
Minnesota
Initiative
Foundation

SMIF's investments and partnerships in

Blue Earth County since 1986

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) is a regional development and philanthropic organization that fosters economic and community vitality in southern Minnesota through a culture of collaboration and partnership. Serving 20 counties which includes 175 communities and one Native nation.

For every donation
from Blue Earth
County of

\$1 → **\$14** is invested back into
Blue Earth
communities.*

**Includes grants, loans & programming*



63 Loans

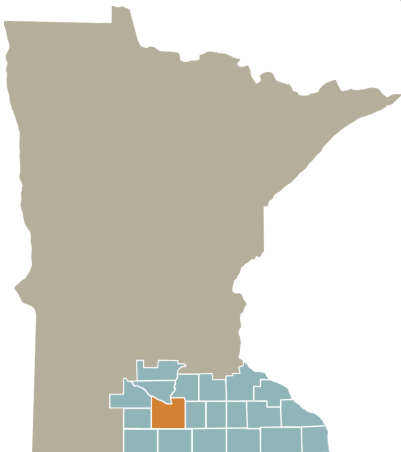
to support entrepreneurs

729 Grants

to support community projects

\$24.2 Million

invested by SMIF in Blue Earth County
through grants, loans and programming



Questions?

Alissa Oeltjenbruns

Vice President of Philanthropy &
Community Vitality

507-475-3056

alissao@smifoundation.org



Check out SMIF's recent activity in your county



SMIF's Recent Activity in Blue Earth County

Early Childhood Spotlight



110 books to Saint John Lutheran Church

Saint John Lutheran Church in Good Thunder will provide a book to each family that attends the center. They will also receive information on the importance of reading to early learners.

Other recent activity:

- 4K books to Mankato Kiwanis Foundation
- \$20K Taylor Rural Child Care Grant to City of Mapleton
- \$6K Early Care and Education Grant to YWCA of Mankato
- 82 providers attended free trainings

Entrepreneurship Spotlight



Grow a Farmer Grant to Region Nine Development Commission

The Region Nine Development Commission will use this grant to fund the Living Earth Center's Emerging Grower's program, which will help new farmers develop their businesses. The commission will also provide mini-grants to farmers who are disadvantaged along with other beginning-farmer support programming.

Other recent activity:

- \$20K Activating Our Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Grant to City of Mapleton
- \$20K Inclusive and Equitable Grant to MN Council of Churches Refugee Services
- Loan to Midwest Xpress

Community Vitality Spotlight



15 gallons of paint to Sterling Congregational Church

Sterling Congregational Church in Amboy was awarded 15 gallons to paint and preserve the outside of their nationally-registered country church, an example of a rural community building from the settlement era prior to the county's first railroad. It is now used for weddings, meetings and Memorial Day services.

Other recent activity:

- \$15,600 Taylor Rural Improvements Grant to City of Lake Crystal
- SMIF serves as the fiscal host for Eagle Lake Community Foundation, Madison Lake Community Foundation and Mapleton Area Foundation

1,297

Children
Supported

159

Entrepreneurs
Supported



GREATER MANKATO
DIVERSITY COUNCIL

**2025-2026 Annual report
to the City of Mankato**

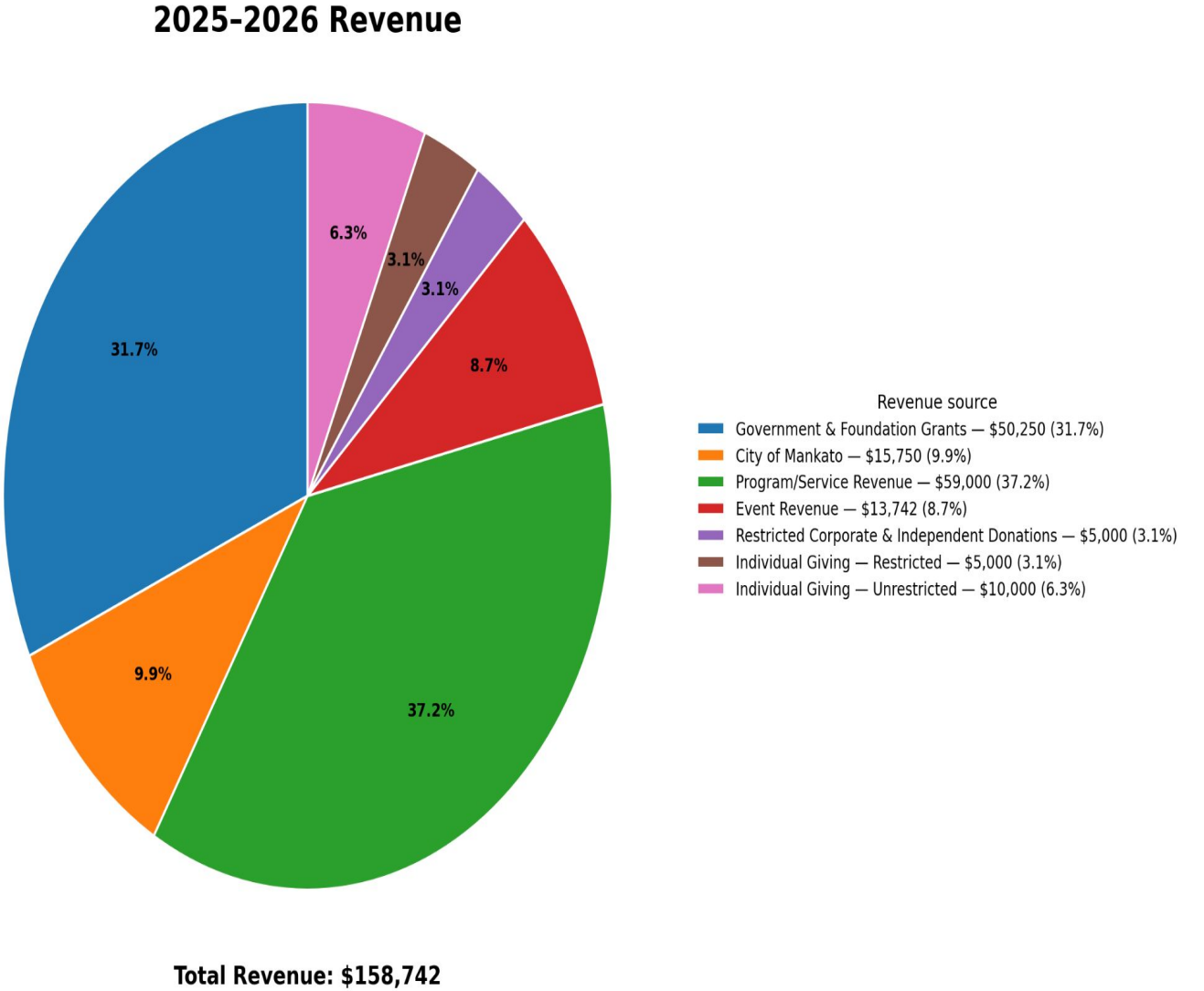
This presentation is an attempt to answer the following questions :

- How does city partnership dollars work for GMDC?
- How much city funding has been received and how much of the overall budget city funded?
- How does city funding support overall programming?
- What is GMDC planning in the near future?

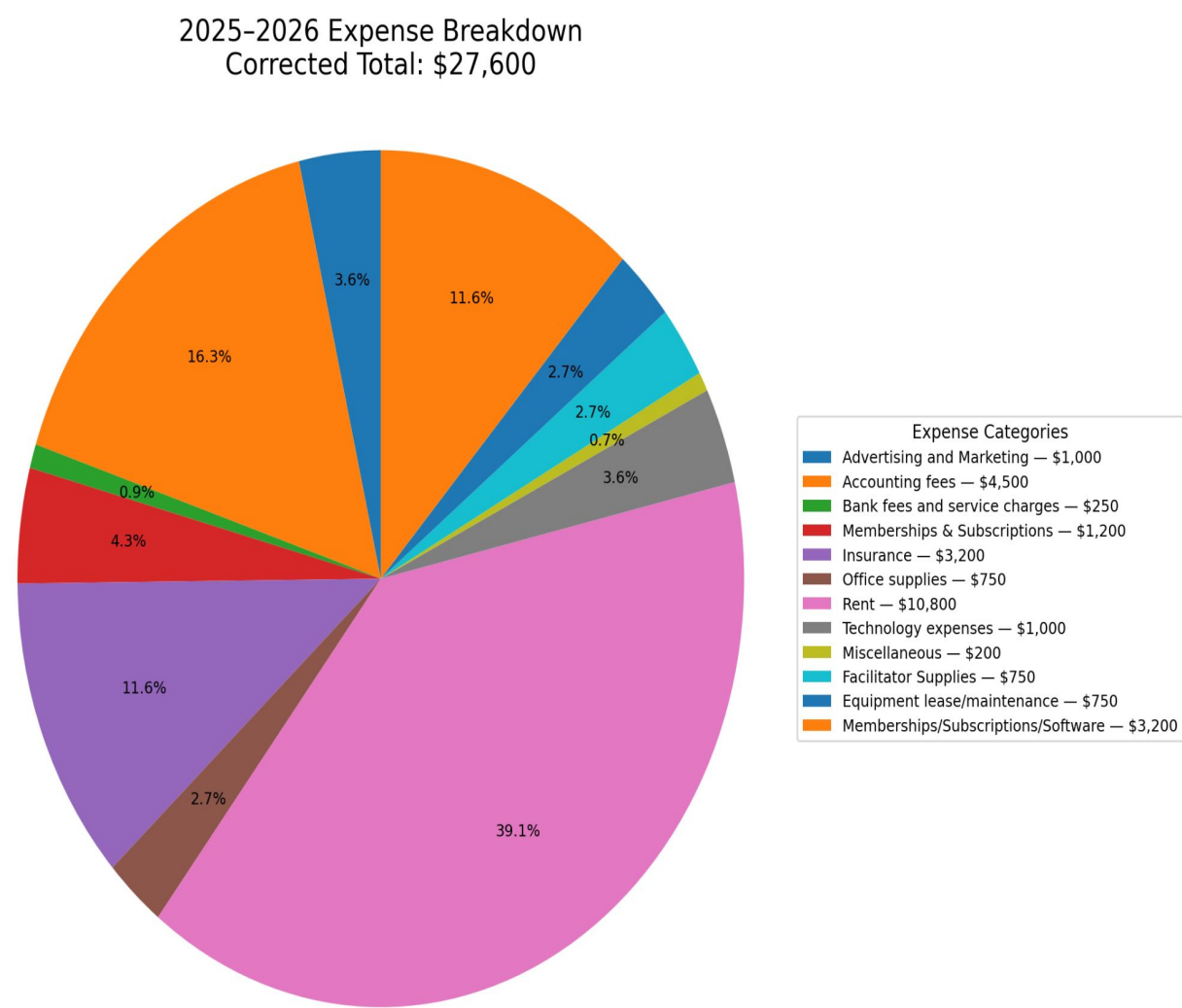
Events and projects GMDC was involved in

- MLK event
- Juneteenth
- ISD77 SHINE
- South Central Minnesota Pride
- Indigenous People's Day
- Day of the Dead
- United Way Reading Festival
- Vine Faith in Action-55+ Event
- Mapping Prejudice project
- MSU Multicultural Networking Event

Revenue	2025-2026
Government & Foundation Grants	\$50,2500
City of Mankato	\$15,750
Program/Service Revenue	\$59,000
Event Revenue	\$13,742
Restricted donations-Corporate and independant	\$5,000
Individual Giving Restricted Unrestricted	\$5,000 \$10,000



2025-2026 Expenses	
Advertising and Marketing	\$1,000
Accounting fees	\$4,500
Bank fees and service charges	\$250
Memberships & Subscriptions	\$1,200
Insurance	\$3,200
Office supplies	\$750
Rent	\$10,800
Technology expenses	\$1,000
Rent	\$10,800
Miscellaneous	\$200
Facilitator Supplies	\$750
Equipment lease/ maintenance	\$750
Memberships/Subscriptions/Sof tware	\$3,200
Total	\$26,600



GMDC Programming

PRW-Promoting Respect Workshops

- Classroom facilitator presentations in alignment with the MDE curriculum and GMDC's training objectives.
- Facilitator recruiting and training for new facilitators.
- The Education Director also tables at local events to collaborate with organizations and show GMDC presence.

GMDC Programming Expansion and New Programming

PRW-Promoting Respect Workshops

- Expand the PRW program to other school districts in the 9 county region.
- Recruit and train new facilitators for all grade levels.
- Training videos created by our Education Director to help facilitators

Heart and Heritage

This is a new program that is under development. This program will bring the heritage of Minnesota's Global Majority communities to the forefront and tie together how it is Minnesota's heritage.

- The goal of the program is to bring the many different heritages to the community and teach about their importance in what makes Minnesota, Minnesota.

Lastly: GMDC in transition

- Leadership change: New Executive Director, Destiny Owens started September 21, 2026
- A New Development and Communications Coordinator was hired.
- We are looking to hire more staff as we grow. We are Particularly
- looking to hire a Marketing and Communications Director.

City of Mankato and GMDC

- The city of Mankato's funding is about 9.9% of the total revenue of GMDC.
- It is not specified for any program, however; it is significant to our functioning.
- As you have seen, we have been involved in many projects. We intend to expand our operation: increasing collaborations with other organizations, expanding geographic range, expanding our program/event, and improving the quality of existing projects/events.
- In 2026-2027 GMDC plans to expand the PRW program to other school districts.
- In 2026-2027 GMDC plans to implement the new Heart and Heritage program in the Mankato community with hopes to expand the program throughout Minnesota in collaboration with other organizations in Minnesota.
- The city of Mankato's support is indispensable in this prospect. We can carry out these possible expansion ideas if you increase the funding. If you decrease the funding, we will not be able to offer all of what we currently offer.
- The city of Mankato is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as shown on its website. The City and GMDC have been close partners since GMDC's inception. GMDC is honored and excited to continue our collaboration for many years to come.



City of Mankato 10.26.26

TWINRIVERSARTS.ORG



OUR MISSION

Twin Rivers' mission is to create an environment that:

- supports **creatives**
- educates the **community** on the value of the creative sector
- integrates **the arts** into the fabric of our lives



WHAT WE DO

- **Connect artists with opportunities** in Greater Mankato and surrounding markets.
- Build and provide **impactful programming and experiences**.
- Strive to **expand the public perception of art to encompass all creative expressions** such as the literary arts, culinary arts, performative arts, etc.
- Work to **provide programming** to meet the needs and interests of the community and the different fields of the creative sector.
- Provide **outreach efforts to improve accessibility of creative opportunities** to community members of all backgrounds and experiences.
- Nurture a collaborative community for the arts through **engagement and communication with the arts organizations** of Greater Mankato.



ARTS PROGRAMMING

MICRO-GALLERY SERIES CREATIVE CONNECTIONS



Monthly art activation event that features an artist with their work at a business.

2026 Impact:

- Opened 7 micro artist galleries.
- Awarded \$1,750 in artist stipends,
- Created new relationships with local businesses.

BEST IN ART SERIES TWIN RIVERS



Features three artists showcasing their work. in hopes of receiving an award.

2026 Impact:

- Held three open to the public events.
- Hosted 9 artists and 125 guests.
- Awarded \$5,250 in awards and stipends.

TWIN RIVERS WRITERS SERIES



Writers discuss their work, experiences, process, future, and more plus Q & A.

2026 Impact:

- Hosted 4 open to the public events.
- Provided \$3,000 in author stipends.
- Hosted over 300 guests.

ANNUAL EVENTS



Southern Minnesota's only juried arts festival in its 25th year.

80+ artist, authors and 1,200 visitors.

Hosted on Shop Small weekend.

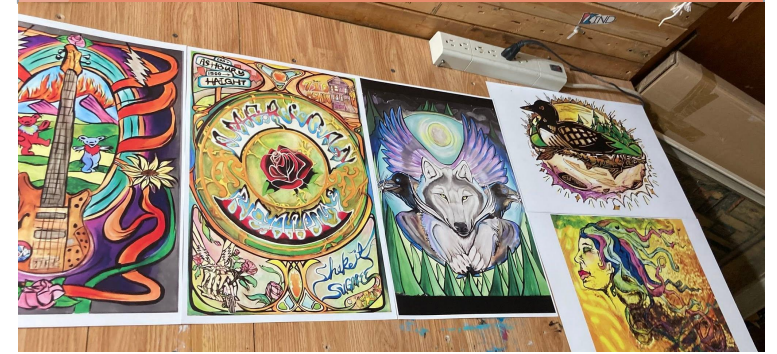


Twin Rivers annual fundraiser in August.

Activates an underutilized green space.

Growth opportunities include expansion to a summer arts festival.

KATOART CRAWL



Adopted Mankato Art Crawl.

Featured 10 locations and with over 20 artist participating.

Hosted 4 artists at Shared Spaces.

PUBLIC ART & CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PROGRAMMING



CityArt Mankato initiatives include CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour, CityArt on the Go, the Public Art Tour and Silo Art.

2026 Impact & Actions:

- Walking Sculpture Tour hosted **26 sculptures** from across the country.
- Distributed **\$90,000+** in artist stipends, commissions, awards and purchases.
- Changed to **single owner structure allowing for CityArt to expand beyond the City Center** boundaries and public art programming to grow in other areas of the City.

HELPING CREATIVITY THRIVE

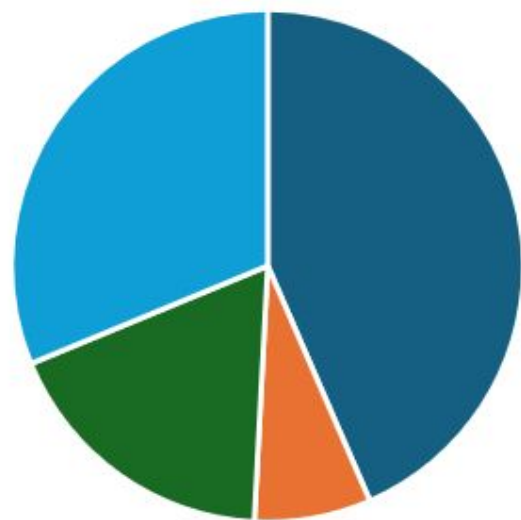
Twin Rivers provides additional impact by actively seeking opportunities to support Mankato's vibrant creative community, with the understanding art enriches our culture and economy.

- Serve as the **Arts Commission** for City of Mankato
- Serve as **fiscal agent** for emerging art organizations/projects.
- **Facilitate commissioning** of public and private art.
- **Provide resources** to connect artists and the community.



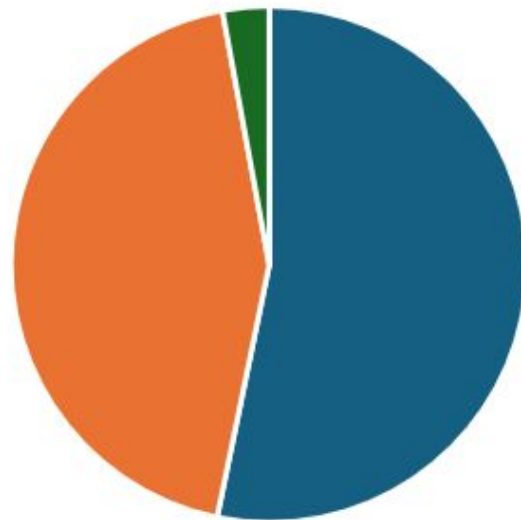
2026 Actuals

2026 Actual Revenue To Date



■ Programming ■ Grants ■ Donations/Fundraising ■ Municipal Support

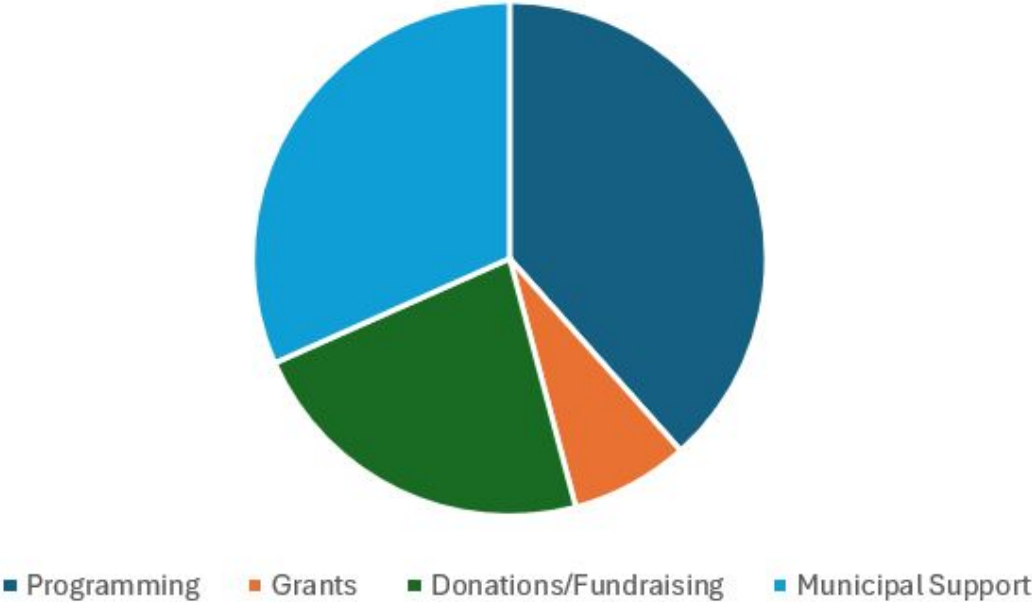
2026 Actual Expense To Date



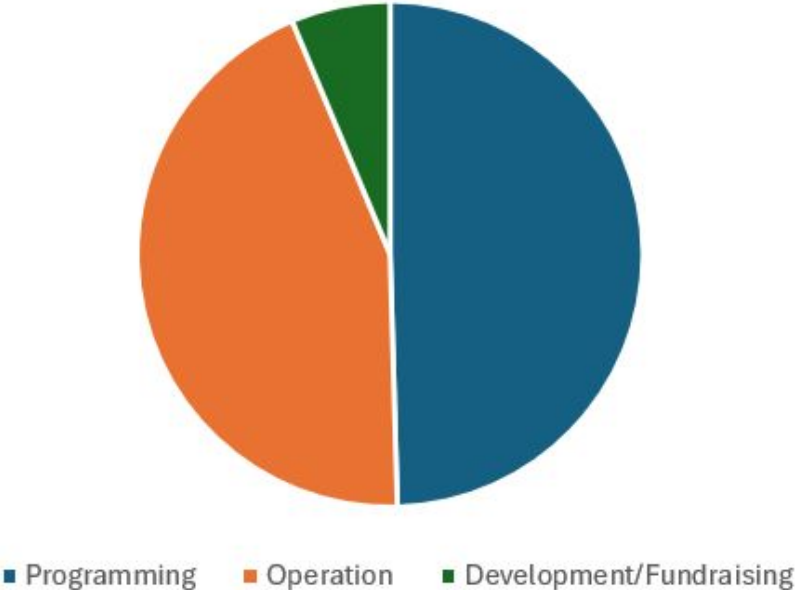
■ Programming ■ Operation ■ Development/Fundraising

2027 With Additional Funding

2027 Revenue with Additional Funding



2027 Expense with Additional Funding

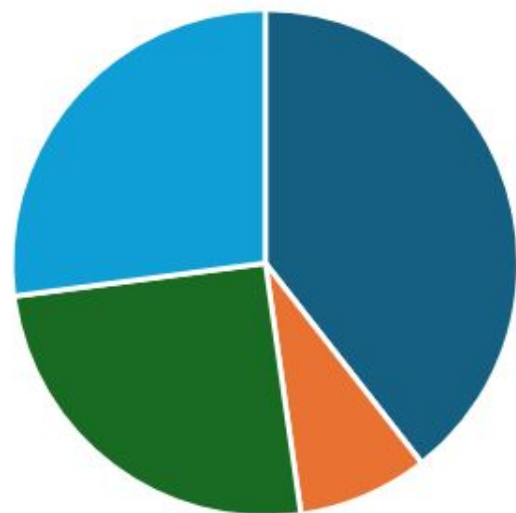


2027 Capacity Planning with Additional Funding

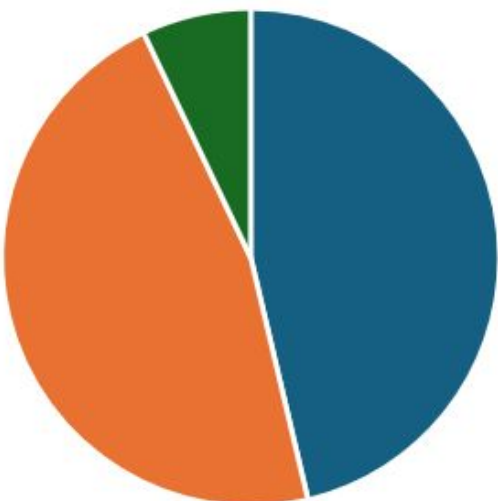
Hours Needed	Committee Initiative	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Programming												
62	Writers Series	4	4	8	4	4	8	4	4	8	6	4	4
64	Best in Art	6	12	4	12	2	2	2	6	12	2	2	2
36	Art Org and Artist Outreach	8	8	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
30	KatoArt Crawl						5	5	5	15			
264	Twin Rivers Art Festival	1	1	1	1	10	10	20	40	40	40	80	20
42	Creative Connections	5	2	5	2	5	2	5	2	5	2	5	2
120	ShopArt (Store + Event Calendar)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
294	CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour	10	20	30	40	60	20	10	10	20	24	40	10
86	CityArt in the Park/Alley	2	2	4	4	10	16	16	16	4	4	4	4
166	Public Art Collection+ Online Tour Launch	24	24	24	30	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
	Arts Commission												
48	City of Mankato Public Art Consultation + Reviews	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
240	Artist + Community + Partner Engagement, Outreach, Fulfillment	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
24	Consultation + Sales	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Development												
90	Grants	10	10	10	10	5	5	5	5	10	5	5	10
154	Donor Cultivation & Fulfillment	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	16	20	10
160	Art in the Garden-Annual Fundraiser	1	1	1	10	20	20	60	40	4	1	1	1
	Marketing/Public Relations												
144	Brand Development + Tactics	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
108	Website	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	12	12	12	8
	Staff												
144	Office Administration & Communications	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
48	Donor Management	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
180	Accounting & Financials	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
73	Board/Exec Development & Support	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	8	10	10	5
4	Fiscal Sponsorship	1			1			1			1		
24	Volunteer Recruitment and Coordination	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2605	TOTALS	178	190	195	222	232	204	244	244	241	214	274	167

2027 Without Additional Funding

2027 Revenue without Additional Funding



2027 Expense without Additional Funding



■ Programming ■ Grants ■ Donations/Fundraising ■ Municipal Support

■ Programming ■ Operation ■ Development/Fundraising

2027 Capacity Planning without Additional Funding

Hours Needed	Committee Initiative	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Programming												
62	Writers Series	4	4	8	4	4	8	4	4	8	6	4	4
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	Development												
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	Marketing/Public Relations												
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108	Website	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	12	12	12	8
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73	Board/Exec Development & Support	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	8	10	10	5
4	Fiscal Sponsorship	1			1			1			1		
24	Volunteer Recruitment and Coordination	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2605	TOTALS	178	190	195	222	232	204	244	244	241	214	274	167



City of Mankato 10.26.26

TWINRIVERSARTS.ORG





AGENDA RECOMMENDATION

City Council Work Session

2.

Meeting Date: 10/26/2026

Agenda Item:

2027 Legislative Priorities.

Recommendation/Action(s):

Review/discussion.

Summary:

Similar to past years, we have continued to set aside time during an October work session to review and discuss legislative priorities for the upcoming State Legislative Session. Representatives from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities and city staff will walk the Council through the efforts in 2027 and share the topics we feel are likely areas for our attention in 2028.



AGENDA RECOMMENDATION

City Council Work Session

3.

Meeting Date: 10/26/2026

Agenda Item:

Budget: General Fund & Special Revenue Fund

Recommendation/Action(s):

Presentation/discussion.

Summary:
