

ARTISTS AT WORK SPRINGFIELD



AAW SPRINGFIELD FAQ'S FOR ARTISTS | 2024



Artists At Work (AAW) is a national workforce resilience program in the spirit of the WPA that is designed to support artists and their communities through artistic civic engagement.

ABOUT US

Artists At Work (AAW) is a national workforce resilience program that provides artists with a living wage salary, health benefits, professional development, and an equitable framework to leverage their creative skills to address the pressing issues of their local community.

The AAW program is structured as a dynamic network of partnerships between artists, cultural organizations, and community partners that sets artists up with strong local and national professional contacts.

AAW Artists are employed for a period of one year to work collaboratively in response to local community needs across a range of issues including mental health, antiracism, migrant justice, climate resiliency, substance abuse recovery, and youth welfare, among others.

We are steadfast in our commitment to providing support to and meeting the needs of today's artists who are both navigating a difficult gig economy and being called upon to address civic and community needs.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

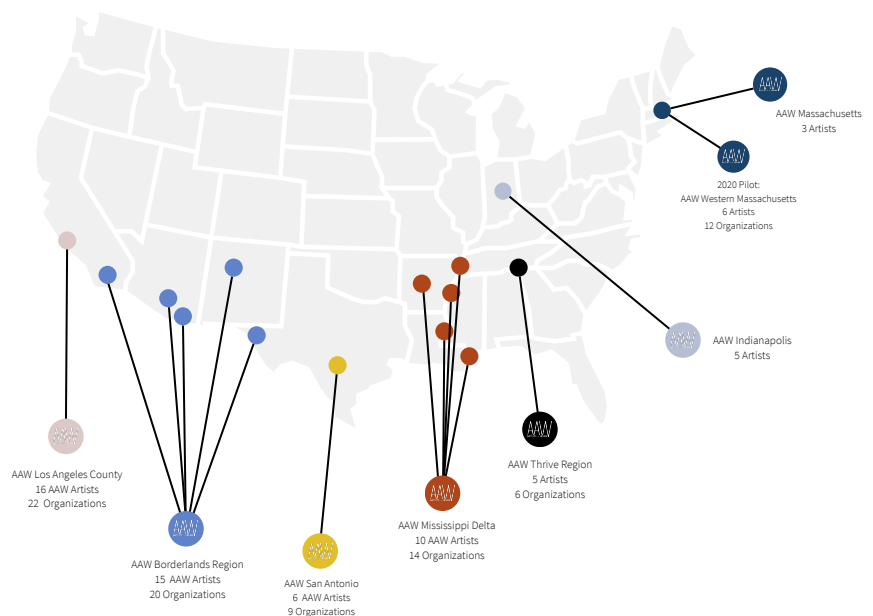
VALUE ARTISTS AS WORKERS by paying them a salary to support their artistic practice and enable them to launch creative projects that serve their communities.

SUPPORT THE CULTURE SECTOR by partnering with organizations and providing funding and resources that enable them to host AAW Artists and bring their work to the public.

HELP COMMUNITIES FLOURISH by embedding AAW Artists in local social impact initiatives, allowing them to contribute their creative problem-solving skills to crucial programs that benefit community members.

GROWTH & IMPACT

To date, Artists At Work has provided 70 artists across 11 states with a salary and health benefits, leveraging their power and creativity in partnership with over 80 cultural and community organizations throughout the nation. We are proud to invest in artists and their communities. As we continue to expand with new cohorts launching in 2024, we are focusing on amplifying and sustaining the impact of these investments by modeling new public/private partnerships and funding streams to support artists.



AAW SPRINGFIELD

TIMELINE

May 2, 2024:

- Open call for participating artists begins

May 10, 2024

- AAW Artists Info session

May 21, 2024

- Open call closes, interviews begin

June 2024

- Final artists selected

July 1, 2024

- AAW Artists begin on payroll + benefits / beginning of project term

July - August 2024

- Onboarding, meeting with partners and community youth in Mason Square

July 2024 - June 2025 2025 (one year term, monthly milestones):

- Months 1 - 3: AAW Artists meet with their organizational partners and set goals & objectives
- Months 4 - 6: AAW Artists meet regularly with their organizational partners; start of public activations
- Months 7 - 9: AAW Artists are working towards meeting their goals and objectives
- Months 10-12: AAW Artists have met their goals and objectives and can present the impact of their project

June 30, 2025

- End of AAW Artist term

AAW SPRINGFIELD

AAW is thrilled to announce a new open call for artists in Springfield, MA!

In partnership with Springfield Cultural Partnership, this open call opportunity will offer 4 local artists 12 months of salary at an annual rate of \$35,570 and health benefits (beginning in July 2024) to bring their skills and creative thinking to local social impact organization MLK Jr. Family Services in collaboration with one of two participating cultural organizations: the Springfield Armory and Springfield City Library, Mason Square Branch. These cross-sector partnerships, led by the 4 selected local artists, will focus on serving and activating the community's youth through artistic civic engagement projects in the areas of 1) identity, history and belonging, and 2) safety and wellness.

In addition to a yearlong salary and health and retirement benefits, participating artists will benefit from long-term partnerships within their local community and take part in ongoing professional development workshops on workforce sustainability topics including fundraising as an independent artist, overall financial wellness and budgeting, social media, PR & marketing, and trauma-informed practice and self-care for artists.

OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

This opportunity is intended for artists who will benefit and have the capacity to engage in a full-time (30+ hours per week) employment role that involves significant time commitment and project development within their community, as well as dedicated time to grow their personal artistic practice and skills.

The Artists At Work program will provide the following to participating artists:

- An annual salary of \$35,570 plus full health benefits
- Professional development & mentorship, including workshops and other resources
- Connection to the work of local social impact organizations and initiatives in areas such as antiracism, justice reform, sustainability and equitable development, health, economy, homelessness and housing, child welfare, worker's rights, and immigrant rights, among others
- Social media assets to promote your work and your AAW project
- A monthly framework to guide your community engagement, projects and personal practice
- In-person and virtual cohort gatherings, including: celebrations, workshops, work shares and studio visits to be planned throughout the term





AAW VALUES & PRINCIPLES

WE VALUE ARTISTS AS WORKERS

We intentionally provide artists with a living wage salary, and full health benefits, rather than a stipend or grant in order to show value for their work product and set them up to be able to use resources like unemployment benefits and COBRA following their term in the program.

ART IS ESSENTIAL TO A HEALTHY SOCIETY

Culture and artists are indispensable parts of American life and our local economies.

PRIORITIZE LOCAL VOICES

While AAW sets up an overarching national framework for its workforce resilience program, each AAW cohort reflects the local ecosystem through partnerships with local leaders, organizations, artists, and audiences that know their communities best.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ARE PARAMOUNT

In selection of locations, hubs, staff, advisors, fellows, and artists, AAW is committed to equitable and diverse representation across age, race, gender, and sexual orientation as well as cultures, disciplines, and geographies.

PUBLIC ART IS A PUBLIC GOOD

Art and culture are woven into the fabric of our lives—not as a luxury we can do without, but as a vital part of a functioning society, integral to our economic, social, and civic life.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Artists At Work (AAW) is structured as a dynamic network of partnerships between artists, cultural organizations (with a focus on those with BIPOC leadership), and social impact initiatives. Each participating artist is paired with organizational partners in their community and paid a living wage salary with full health benefits for one year. The artists continue to create art while being embedded in local social impact initiatives that provide direct services to community members across a range of cross-sector issues including child welfare, food and housing security, antiracism, physical and mental health, justice reform, sustainable and equitable development, environmental justice and climate resiliency, and immigration.

Each AAW Artists works directly with community members over a one-year term to co-create projects that benefit communities in one of three primary ways: helping communities heal from trauma, preserving cultural legacy and heritage, or advocating for and amplifying community voices on behalf of issues that are directly impacting their lives and well-being.

AAW MILESTONES

AAW is in regular communication with each AAW Artist, Culture Hub, and Social Impact Initiative, setting monthly milestones as a guidepost for each partnership and project. At the top of each month the regional administrative fellow sends out a milestones document for the artists to reference project goals and deadlines, upcoming workshops, and general program announcements. Through these milestones documents, we aim to provide structure to empower artists to continue in their practice and community engagement.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Artists At Work also provides participating artists with professional development workshops on workforce sustainability topics. These workshops cover areas such as fundraising as an independent artist, overall financial wellness and budgeting, social media, grant writing, PR & marketing, and trauma-informed practice and self-care for artists.

EVALUATION

Artists At Work (AAW) is committed to rigorous evaluation to measure program impact and identify best practices. Key evaluation metrics include the number of artists employed, the number of projects completed, community engagement rates, qualitative feedback from participants, and measurable changes in attitudes and behaviors related to the targeted issues. AAW Artists work directly with community members over a one-year term to co-create projects. AAW Artists work across a variety of social impact areas that broadly fall into one of three areas of community engagement: helping communities heal from trauma, preserving cultural legacy and heritage, or advocating for and amplifying community voices on behalf of issues that are directly impacting their lives and well-being.

Artists At Work regularly conducts conversational interviews with AAW Artists and partners to receive feedback. A comprehensive evaluation report will be conducted at the end of the program.



BEING AN AAW ARTIST

What does work look like for AAW Artists during the term of the program?

AAW Artists are employed for a period of one year with two primary areas of focus: (1) to engage with and deepen their own art practice and (2) to work collaboratively with local partners in response to community needs across a range of issues including mental health, antiracism, migrant justice, climate resiliency, substance abuse recovery, cultural preservation, and youth welfare, among others.

During your time as an AAW Artist, you will:

- **Make Art!** – This is the primary responsibility of each AAW Artist – to continue and make time for their own art practice on their own terms. (Approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of your time each week).
- **Develop a Community Project** – Each AAW will work collaboratively with local partners to develop a project that actively engages with and addresses the needs of their community, leveraging art and creativity for social impact. (Approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of your time each week).
- **Document Your Process** – AAW Artists will keep a video, audio, or written journal and/or other documentation of their process throughout the year. Team AAW is invested in amplifying the inspiring work of AAW Artists and their communities through storytelling on social media and other platforms.
- **Participate in Professional Development** – Artists At Work (AAW) will regularly host workshops throughout the year aimed at helping to equip AAW Artists with new skills and training to better leverage their creativity for community engagement work and sustainable employment opportunities.
- **Set Milestones & Give Program Feedback** – Team AAW embraces a growth mindset and collaborative learning. AAW Artists will receive suggested monthly milestones during the term of the program to help guide the process and will be asked periodically for open and honest feedback on the program.
- **Share Your Work** – AAW Artists will share their work publicly with members of the community at two points during the term – at the midpoint for a works-in-process presentation and at the end for a final celebration!

“During my time with AAW I was able to devote a chunk of my time in developing curriculums that are still relevant in my work and continue to offer me financial support. AAW allowed me the time that I needed to not have to worry about selling my art but instead to focus on developing future projects, creative freedom and skills development.”

-AAW Artist, Karina Ceja (Los Angeles County 2022)



AAW
ARTISTS AT WORK

WHAT DOES AN AAW COMMUNITY PROJECT LOOK LIKE?

One of the key aims of the Artists At Work program is to leverage art and creativity for social impact. This happens through projects that are led and developed by AAW Artists in partnership with members of their local community. While the creativity, variety and scope of the community projects that AAW Artists have developed during their time with the program is boundless, we have found that these projects benefit communities in one of three primary ways: promoting community wellness, preserving cultural legacy and heritage, or advocating for and amplifying community voices on behalf of issues that are directly impacting their lives and well-being.

Below are just a few examples of the many projects created by AAW Artists that have left us incredibly inspired. For more, please visit our [AAW YouTube channel](#).

COMMUNITY WELLNESS



Amanda Romero

City of Albuquerque's Department of Arts & Culture | The Sanitary Tortilla Factory

Amanda developed arts programming to offer to currently and formerly incarcerated youth and adults. In partnership with Gordon Bernell Charter School, Amanda implemented both long-term and short-term programs that work into the existing structure of Sanitary Tortilla Factory's ongoing framework and organizational capacity as artist and community advocates. By engaging with system-impacted populations, their hope was to create ongoing dialogue and projects that not only allow for creative expression for those who are inside the system, but create sustainable connections during the transition out of incarceration.

[HEAR FROM AMANDA](#)

ADVOCACY



Natalia Ventura

Casa Familiar | The Friends of Friendship Park

Natalia brought needed attention to the construction of two parallel 30' walls through Friendship Park, a binational park located at the western end of the US-Mexico border where for generations people have gathered on both sides to meet with loved ones. Informed by the work of local doctors, activists, and community leaders who are mobilizing against 30' walls, Natalia worked with organizers to host a resistance encampment called "El Pueblito." The activation was anchored by Friends of Friendship Park, with an invitation to the region's grassroots organizations, activist groups and beyond.

[HEAR FROM NATALIA](#)

CULTURAL PRESERVATION



Lisa Hicks-Gilbert

Delta Commons Group | Lee Street Community Center

Lisa Hicks-Gilbert launched "Silent No More," a multimedia exhibition memorializing the Elaine Massacre of 1919, unsealing the previously untold stories of the victims, survivors, and descendants. During her year with AAW, Lisa Hicks-Gilbert also was elected the first Black Mayor of Elaine, Arkansas, and the first female Mayor of Elaine, a historic moment for the town and its citizens. Mayor Hicks-Gilbert is currently serving her first term while continuing to cultivate the power of the arts to tell the important stories of Elaine's history.

[HEAR FROM LISA](#)

What types of artists are eligible to apply for Artists At Work?

Artists, culture bearers and culture makers of all disciplines and traditions may apply! However, all applicants must be local to the greater Springfield area to be eligible for AAW Springfield and need a valid social security number, applicable visa / right to work in the United States to be added to payroll.

What will I do as an AAW Artist during the one-year program term?

AAW ARTISTS have two areas of focus – continue their own artistic practice, and engage with and become a resource for their communities by working with a local Social Impact Organization or Initiative.

During the term, AAW ARTISTS will:

- Engage with their own studio practice and creation of their work!
- Commit time and creative thinking to supporting the mission and work of a local Social Impact Organization or Initiative and the communities they serve; this includes reflecting and research, build relationships with staff and community, as well as active public events.
- Create new work, an ongoing project or engagements in collaboration with organizational partners and community members; when possible, the program encourages a free, public aspect of the work (presentation, exhibition, event, or virtual gathering).
- Keep a video, audio, or written journal and/or other documentation of the work created during participation and share this documentation. Actively document their process.
- Engage in regular progress check-ins and meetings, and a final evaluation after the completion of Artist's 12-month term.
- Provide THE OFFICE with periodic open and honest feedback on the program, challenges and needs throughout the 12-month period.
- Participate in professional development workshops and regularly scheduled work shares with other regional Artists.
- If applicable, present new work in partnership organizational partners and community members.

Are the payments to AAW Artists a stipend or grant?

Artists are considered employees of THE OFFICE performing arts + film, Inc. during their term with the Artists At Work program and will receive a salary administered through our payroll with applicable taxes withheld. Our aim is to support artists' work with a base living wage, healthcare benefits and workers compensation coverage during their time with the AAW program, and provide them access to unemployment benefits and COBRA coverage after their term.

Are there additional resources for expenses associated with my AAW project?

Yes! Each AAW Artist in Springfield has a budget of \$5,000 for materials and equipment to be used towards your AAW social impact project. We ask that you discuss the details with the AAW administrative team.

Can AAW Artists take other work?

We understand artists may have additional opportunities or unique employment situations arise during the AAW period, and we certainly don't want to put people in a position to turn down work. As long as each artist is able to maintain their contribution to their social impact project and continue their own practice while holding additional employment, they remain eligible for the program. What we would like to avoid is selecting artists who already have ample funding or a full-time artistic position / appointment that will continue on throughout the program period.

Are there other AAW Artists and/or organizations outside of my region that I can connect with?

AAW is a growing network that includes 62 artists and administrative fellows and over 80 cultural and cross-sector organizational partners across 10 states (Arkansas, Arizona, California, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Mexico, Tennessee, Texas). We will have opportunities throughout the term to connect with this national cohort. If there are any artists or organizations you would like to contact in particular, please let us know.

I have more questions! Who should I direct them to?

The AAW team at THE OFFICE is happy to field any questions; for general program inquiries: Gabriela Yadegari, gabriela@artists-at-work.org ; for contract, finance or health insurance inquiries: Kyla Gardner, kgardner@theofficearts.com.



AAW

ARTISTS AT WORK

*Investing in Artists
and their communities*

