

FY2025 ANNUAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

The Mississippi Arts Commission's mission is to foster creativity that enhances the quality of life in Mississippi communities through statewide investment in the arts. In FY25, MAC supported its mission by focusing on reaching new grantees in underserved areas of the state, continuing to expand the Mississippi Whole Schools Program, and offering educational and informative resources through the 2024 State Arts Conference. The goals mentioned throughout the report refer to MAC's strategic plan, which can be found on MAC's website, arts.ms.gov.

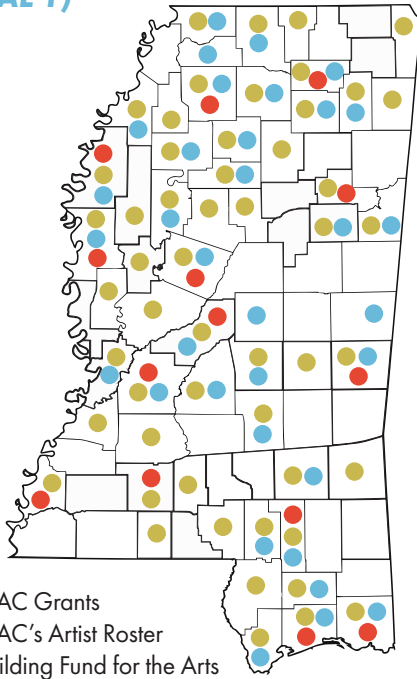


WHO WE ARE

The Mississippi Arts Commission is a state agency serving Mississippians through grants and special programs. MAC grants enhance Mississippi communities, provide monetary support to artists and arts organizations, promote and facilitate arts education, and celebrate Mississippi's cultural heritage. Funding for MAC grants is provided by support from the Mississippi Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, and private sources.

SUPPORTING THE ARTS THROUGH GRANTS (GOAL 1)

(GOAL 1)



\$1.7M
MAC Grant
Funds Awarded

92
House Districts

52
Senate Districts

405 Grants

6%
Increase
from FY24
in number of
grants awarded

- MAC Grants
- MAC's Artist Roster
- Building Fund for the Arts

Types of Grants Offered

Organizational Grants | awarded to organizations, non-profits, etc.

Operating Grants | up to \$30,000

Project Grants | up to \$5,000

Mini-Grants | up to \$1,000

Individual Grants | awarded to individual artists.

Artist Fellowships | up to \$5,000

Folk Arts Apprenticeships | up to \$2,000

Project Grants | up to \$2,000

Mini-Grants | up to \$500

Details about who can apply for these types of grants and what they can be used for can be found by visiting arts.ms.gov.

MAC ARTIST ROSTER

MAC's Artist Roster is a juried listing of nearly **100** artists and educational professionals who are available to perform or present their artform in communities around the state.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE ARTS

In the latest report from the U.S. Bureau of Economic and Analysis, The Mississippi arts and culture sector was a **\$2.7 billion** industry in 2023 (1.79% of the state's GDP), representing **31,781** jobs (2.56% of Mississippi's workforce), and total compensation of **\$1.5 billion**.



31,781
jobs



1.79% of the
state's GDP



\$2.7 BILLION
industry in
Arts and Culture

BUILDING FUND FOR THE ARTS (BFA) (GOAL 1)

\$5.2
Million Awarded

34 arts organizations across **23** counties
(**30** House Districts; **25** Senate Districts)

Out of the **62** organizations that submitted proposals, **34** arts facilities were awarded funds to support the repair, renovation, or construction of their buildings for the public to make full use of these spaces. The Building Fund for the Arts (BFA) grant program provides support for the repair, renovation and/or construction of public spaces that provide year-round arts programming. The continued support for BFA from the legislature strengthens endeavors to stimulate local economies and maintain creative spaces throughout the state.

Recipients:

- Ballet Mississippi
- Brookhaven Little Theatre
- City of Meridian
- City of Ocean Springs
- Coast Episcopal School
- Delta Arts Alliance
- E. E. Bass Education and Development Foundation
- Friends of Pickens Public Library
- Foundation for Mississippi History
- Goldring/Woldenberg Institute for Southern Jewish Life
- Hattiesburg Community Arts Center
- International Museum of Muslim Cultures (canceled)
- Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience
- Mississippi Children's Museum
- Mississippi Museum of Art
- New Albany Main Street
- Panola Playhouse
- Pearl River Glass Conservatory
- Prairie Belt Blues Foundation
- Union County Historical Society & Heritage Museum

MISSISSIPPI WHOLE SCHOOLS (GOALS 1 AND 3)

Mississippi Whole Schools (MWS) is a program of distinction for academic success through an arts-integrated approach to teaching. Professional development provides training in standards-based learning and assessment, closing the achievement gap for learners, and resulting in a positive impact on campus culture and climate.



- **29 schools actively engaged in the program**
733 schools reached
3,751 teachers directly benefited from the program
29,208 students benefited from the program
54,768 students reached
379 Professional Development Workshops
360 artist opportunities
- **Winter Institute**
181 attending
24 schools represented
30 presenters focusing on assessing foundations of curriculum through the arts
- **Summer Institute**
323 attending
35 schools represented
65 presenters (state and national) focusing on understanding foundations of arts integration
- **Administrative Leadership Retreat**
73 educators attending
24 schools represented
4 state recognized presenters focusing on leadership growth

"Through arts integration, my students have a better retention of content knowledge in all subject areas."

- MWS
Classroom
Teacher

"We had fewer discipline reports the entire year than we had the first semester through our arts-integrated approach."

- MWS
Campus
Administrator

- **10** new schools applied to the program
- Consultants provided data aligned training that included on-site training for teachers and leadership training for administrators. Artist campus visits provided authentic arts experiences for students and curriculum connection strategies for teachers.
- **\$50,000** granted from the Hardin Foundation
- **\$19,477** additional funds generated
- **Statistics**
 - * **99%** of teachers reported that students were more engaged and motivated because of their use of arts-integrated instruction.
 - * Model Arts Integration Schools scored an average of **16** points higher than the state in ELA, Math, and Science, and surpassed their district peers by a collective **24** points. (**31, 24,16**)

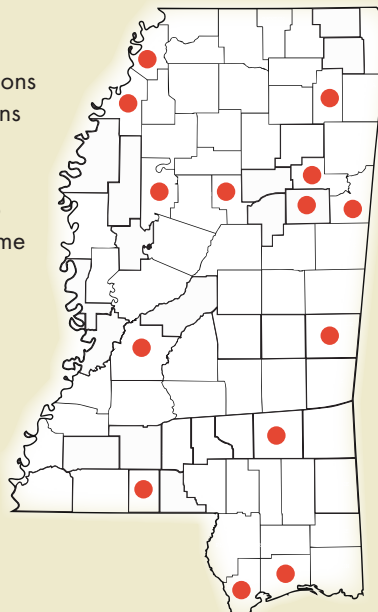


MISSISSIPPI
WHOLE SCHOOLS

MEET THE MAC (GOAL 1)

MAC hosted **19** Meet the MAC presentations across the state in FY25. These presentations gave attendees the opportunity to ask questions and find out more about the grants offered by MAC and the process to apply. MAC funded **82** grants from first-time applicants in **27** counties, including one "underserved" county.

Clay	Lee
Coahoma	Leflore
Hancock	Lowndes
Harrison	Montgomery
Hinds	Oktibbeha
Jones	Pike
Lauderdale	Tunica



AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS (GOAL 2)

MAC Received a Bronze Telly Award for the Grantee Spotlight video series created during FY24. In addition, MAC was nominated for a 2025 Regional EMMY Award for the mini-documentary featuring Cedric Burnside created for the 2024 Governor's Arts Awards.

MAC created three more Grantee Spotlight videos in FY25. Scan the QR code to view the past and recent Grantee Spotlight videos featuring MAC grantees!

MISSISSIPPI ARTS HOUR (GOAL 1)



The Mississippi Arts Hour airs in partnership with Mississippi Public Broadcasting on MPB Radio on Sundays, at 5 p.m. In FY25, **52 guests** were featured, including Noah Saterstrom, Jasmine Holmes, Jason Bouldin, Annette Trefzer, Darrian Douglas and more. Out of the 52 guests featured during the calendar year of 2024, **42 guests** were from outside of Jackson, MS.

In addition, the Mississippi Arts Hour went global for a special episode recorded during the Venice Architecture Biennale. Executive Director David Lewis spoke with Mississippi State University President Mark Keenum at the American Pavilion of the Venice Biennale, where MSU’s two design research centers were on display for the first time in the university’s history. The episode was recorded in June 2025 and aired in August of 2025.



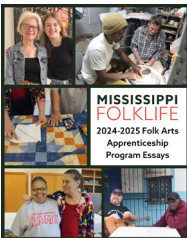
MISSISSIPPI POET LAUREATE (GOAL 2)

In FY2025 Governor Tate Reeves appointed accomplished poet Ann Fisher-Wirth of Oxford, Miss., as Mississippi’s Poet Laureate. Serving as the official state poet for a term of four years, the state’s Poet Laureate creates and reads appropriate poetry at state occasions, promotes literacy, and represents the rich cultural heritage of Mississippi. Fisher-Wirth retired in 2022 from the University of Mississippi, where she taught for 33 years in the MFA program and directed the Environmental Studies program.

FOLK ARTS & MISSISSIPPI FOLKLIFE (GOAL 2)

National Folk Festival

Jackson, Mississippi, was selected to host the National Folk Festival in 2025, 2026, and 2027. On November 16, 2024, the National Folk Festival hosted a preview day in downtown Jackson at the Welcome Jackson mural. The preview featured folk artists from across the country, including Mississippi’s own 2025 Governor’s Arts Awards recipient, Eddie Cotton Jr. The event provided the community with a sneak peek of what to expect at the festival in future years and served as a promotional tool.



Mississippi Folklife (www.mississippifolklife.org)

Mississippi Folklife is an online publication featuring original writing and documentary work focused on the expressive culture of everyday life and traditional arts within the state. Originally a print publication, Mississippi Folklife was established in 1927 by the Mississippi Folklore Society. In FY25, Mississippi Folklife published **9** essays including **4** online exhibits featuring the artists who participated in MAC’s annual Folk Arts Apprenticeship grants program.



Folk Arts Apprenticeship Showcase

This year, for the Folk Arts Apprentice Showcase, MAC partnered with the Briarwood Arts Center in Jackson and the Bentonia Blues Festival.



Brian Newman
+ **Justin Mayfield**
Ceramics



Jimmy "Duck" Holmes
+ **Chris Gill**
Blues Guitar



Rhonda Blasingame
+ **Hazel Gaines**
Quilting



Wendy Jean Garrison
+ **Sophia Doyle**
Slide Guitar



STATE ARTS CONFERENCE (GOAL 2)

The 2024 State Arts Conference, presented by The Westin Jackson, had over **200** attendees. The Westin Jackson provided the perfect atmosphere for the conference. This year, the conference focused on topics ranging from the National Folk Festival to Public Art, in preparation for MAC’s new Public Art Grant, which launched in FY26. In addition, the evening event called ArtTalk featured a screening of the documentary “WE START WITH THE THINGS WE FIND” and a discussion with the filmmaker Thomas Piper and featured LOT-EK designer Ada Tolla about the work they have done with the Building Fund for the Arts grantee Pike School of Art. Mississippi native and photojournalist Kate Medley was the keynote speaker. Other speakers and topics included Sharon Yazowski, President and CEO of the Levitt Foundation, KultureCity on sensory accessibility and acceptance, Building a Volunteer Community with Volunteer Mississippi, a screening of “Eudora,” and a discussion with filmmaker Anthony Thaxton, among others. MAC Roster Artists also had an opportunity to receive a FREE professional headshot during the conference.



GOVERNOR’S ARTS AWARDS (GOALS 2,3 AND 4)

The Governor’s Arts Awards is an annual event produced by MAC since 1988, that honors outstanding artists and organizations and celebrates Mississippi’s cultural legacy. In 2025 MAC honored 6 outstanding recipients:

Walt Grayson

Lifetime Achievement

Eddie Cotton Jr.

Excellence in Music

Jane C. Hiatt

Stephen C. Edds Patron of the Arts

Robert Poore

Excellence in Landscape Architecture and Visual Arts

Rising Stars Fife and Drum Band

Excellence in Traditional Arts

Tate Taylor

Excellence in Motion Picture

POETRY OUT LOUD (GOAL 4)

Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering free educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition for high school students across the country.

This year **19** schools; **53** teachers; **852** students participated in the competition statewide. **9** high school students advanced to the Poetry Out Loud state finals which were hosted at Mississippi Public Broadcasting in Jackson.

State Champion | Saabria Prater

Senior, Pascagoula High School

2nd Place | Nita Hardin

Sophomore, New Albany High School

3rd Place | Sophie Mattingly

Freshman, Rosa Scott High School

