



The Herald-Times

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Program gives struggling artists \$1,000 a month



A few commissions, contracts, sales or cancellations can dramatically change what artists earn in a given year. GETTY IMAGES

The result: freedom and time to focus on their art

Joanna Woronkiewicz
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THE CONVERSATION

Though artificial intelligence is making it easier than ever to produce images, music and text, the technology is also making it harder for the people who have traditionally produced this work to earn a living.

A photographer who once was commissioned to make art for an advertising campaign is now competing with graphics produced by the AI image generator Midjourney. A novelist who used to make money on the side as a technical writer is seeing that work be replaced by a series of prompts in ChatGPT.

The extent to which AI will upend creative work remains unsettled. But that uncertainty has made guaranteeing income for creatives a more viable policy idea.

In fact, creatives in New York recently participated in the largest basic income program for artists in U.S. history,

The program selected artists through a weighted lottery. It adopted an expansive definition of “artist.” Anyone engaged in artistic, cultural or community-centered creative practices – such as musicians, storytellers or muralists – was eligible to apply.

the Guaranteed Income for Artists initiative.

Spearheaded by Creatives Rebuild New York and primarily funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the program gave 2,400 artists across New York state \$1,000 a month beginning in June 2022. There were no work requirements and no restrictions on how the money could be spent. The program sought to improve the financial stability of artists and encourage the public to

see them as workers who deserve a stable income and social support.

As researchers who study artists, cultural work and public policy, we evaluated this program to see whether it achieved its stated goals. Our main finding was simple: Artists did not stop working. Instead, they changed the kind of work they did.

Cash buys time

Artists often make choices that look strange in standard economic models, which typically assume workers will prioritize higher wages while balancing work against leisure time.

Artists, on the other hand, may stay in poorly paid, unstable arts work, even when other work pays more. Economists have long described this as a “work-preference” model. Put plainly, they argue that artists get value from the work itself, not just from the paycheck.

The guaranteed-income program, which was geared toward low-income artists, offered a rare chance to see how a financial cushion would influence the kind of work they focused on,

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City funds 2026 arts projects with \$76K awards

Dave DeMille
The Herald-Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

The City of Bloomington has awarded \$76,000 in Arts Project Grants to artists, organizations and community groups to support public arts programming across the city.

The funding, announced as part of the 2026 Arts Project grant cycle, will support projects designed to expand access to arts experiences for residents and visitors, according to a community announcement.

Individual grant awards are up to \$3,000, with most recipients receiving partial funding. The projects selected reflect a range of artistic disciplines and community engagement efforts, according to the announcement.

Highlighted projects include a 2026 Hispanic Heritage Month celebration organized by the FAR Center for Contemporary Arts, a community play reading series from Redbud Books and a participatory storytelling and performance series titled “Urban Circles” by Babel Theatre. Additional funded work includes new music by Tortilla Jackson, a Latin soul ensemble led by Nicholas Najera, and We’re Crankie Fest, a scroll art festival.

Other supported initiatives include a cultural performance and documentation project from the CHAKCHAK Languages and Cultures Foundation and the “Road Trips” live music performance series led by Joan Hawkins, according to the announcement.

Funding for the grants includes \$31,000 from the Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association, with the remaining amount provided through the city’s 2026 General Fund. Applications were evaluated based on artistic quality, community impact and organizational capacity.

“We appreciate how engaged the Bloomington community has been throughout the grant cycle, and we are inspired by the many creative ideas and connections that have emerged,” said Nada Abdelrahim, chair of the Bloomington Arts Commission. “This process shows just how much the arts matter to our city and our community.”

Grant recipients

The 2026 recipients include Artists for Climate Awareness; Babel Theater Project; Blockhouse Bar LLC; Bloom-

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Bloomington tests parking kiosks to replace aging meters

Dave DeMille
The Herald-Times

The City of Bloomington is inviting residents, visitors and downtown stakeholders to test two parking payment systems as officials consider replacing aging meter technology.

The public testing effort, announced by the city’s Parking Services Division, allows community members to try two kiosk systems — IPS and Flowbird — and share feedback through an on-site survey, according to a community announcement.

The systems are being evaluated as

potential replacements for existing parking meters, which were found to be beyond their expected service life in a June 2026 Parking Rate Study and Comprehensive Review conducted by Walker Consultants, according to the announcement.

Testing is available at the Parking

Services office, 206 S. Walnut Street, and does not require an appointment. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., except on city-observed holidays, and the testing period will continue through mid-August.

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