

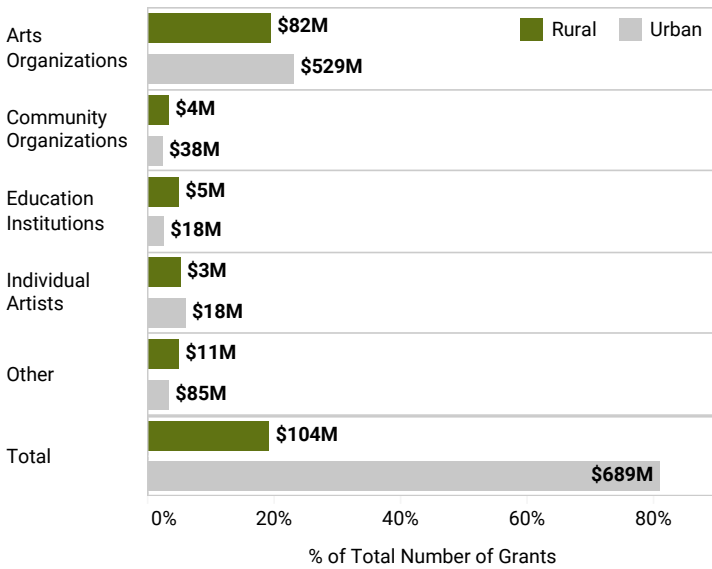
2026 State Arts Agency Grant Making Facts

Rural Communities

Support For Arts In Rural Communities

Rural communities* often face unique challenges of isolation, population flight and resource limitations. Arts can help mitigate these challenges by creating small businesses, improving quality of life for residents and attracting visitors and investments. State arts agencies (SAAs) play a vital role in bringing arts to rural communities.

Rural and Urban Grant Making by Institution Type FY2024

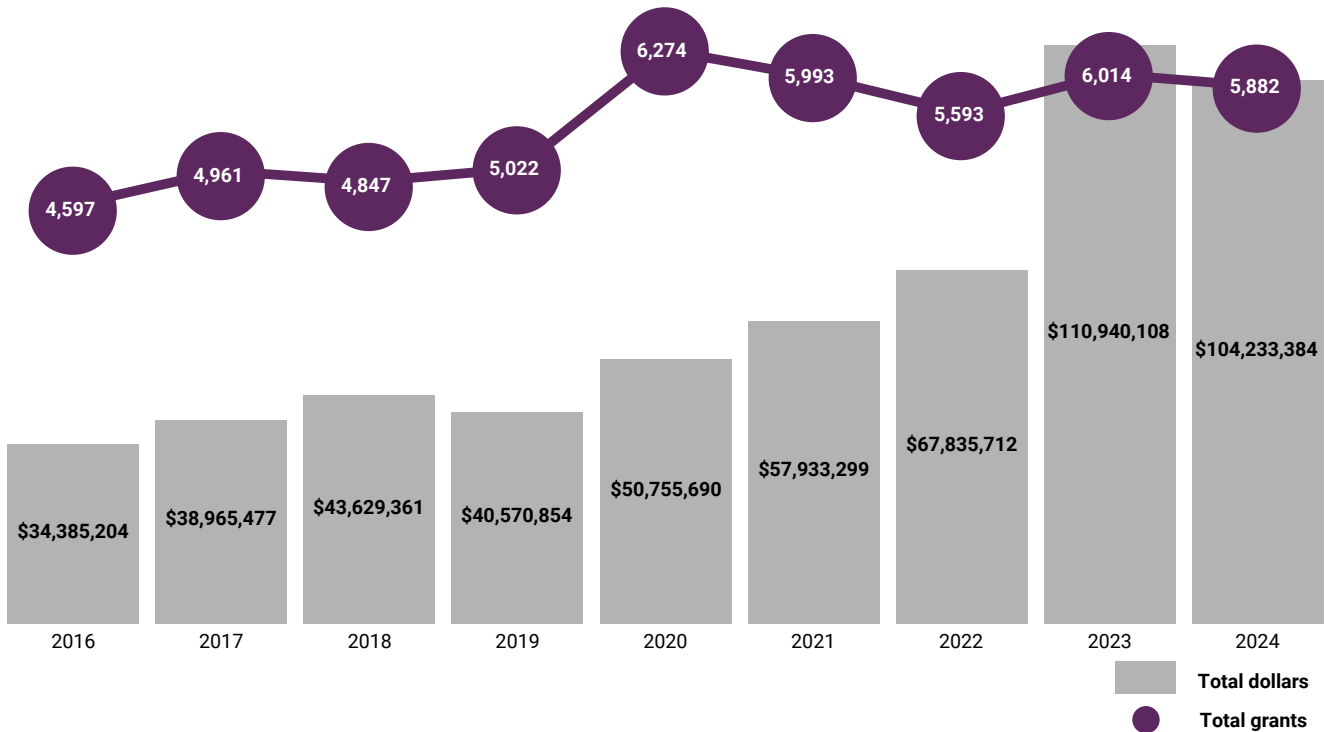


State Arts Agency Grants to Rural Areas FY2024

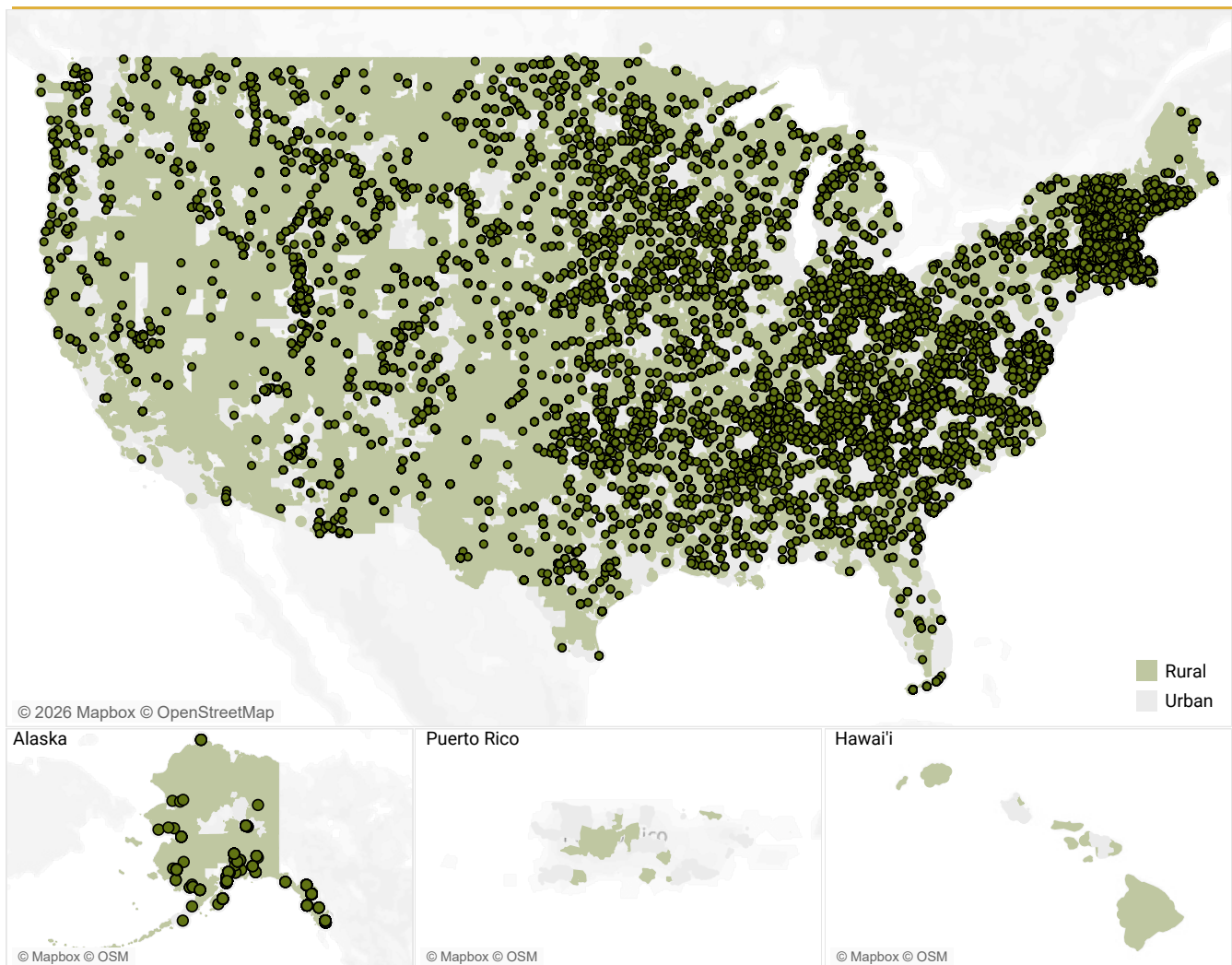
Total dollars awarded	\$104,233,384
Percentage of all grant dollars	13%
Number of grants awarded	5,882
Share of all SAA grants	19%
Median award size	\$5,000
Communities served**	2,844

*Rural is defined as ZIP codes outside of an urban core with populations under 50,000.
 **Communities served is based on unique census tracts receiving grants or where activities took place.

Rural Communities Grant Making 10-Year Trend



Rural Communities Grant Locations FY2020-2024



How Do State Arts Agencies Serve Rural Communities?

For more, visit NASAA's [State Arts Agency Innovations archive](#).

Grant funding: SAAs provide vital investment in rural American through direct grants that reach communities across the nation.

Accessibility and equity: Because SAAs channel both federal and state dollars, SAAs ensure underserved rural communities can be reached. SAAs' grant distribution naturally aligns with the nation's rural-urban population patterns. Although percentages vary, states with larger rural populations direct larger proportions of grants to rural communities.

Addressing unique infrastructure: Proximity to a metropolitan area allows citizens to access major arts institutions and markets, which are often out of reach for rural communities. SAAs can help rural communities create their own cultural hubs through arts programming in community facilities such as schools, community centers and other public venues.

Preserving cultural heritage: Through initiatives such as heritage trails, tourism and support for the traditional arts, SAAs offer a variety of resources aimed at promoting and preserving cultural heritage in rural communities.

Public partnerships: SAAs partner with government agencies at all levels to administer programs in rural areas. For example, some SAAs work with health and human service agencies to promote arts and wellness. Others work on facilitating rural economic development with agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Rural Promise Zones.

This report draws on data from state arts agencies' Final Descriptive Reports of grant-making activity submitted annually to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and NASAA. NASAA's collection of grant-making statistics is supported in part through a cooperative agreement with the NEA. For more information on the work of state arts agencies, call 202-347-6352, email nasaa@nasaa-arts.org or visit <https://nasaa-arts.org/>.