



Sarah Leys
Director
Community and Economic
Development Department

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ald. Janessa Wilkins, Chair
Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Sarah Leys, Director
Community & Economic Development Department

DATE: January 26, 2026

RE: 2026-2028 RAAC Funding Agreement and Lease Agreement

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarah Leys".

The proposed funding agreement between the City of Rockford and the Rockford Area Arts Council is a three-year agreement for 2026, 2027, and 2028 in the amount of \$125,000 per year (or \$375,000 in total). The 2026-2028 Funding Request and Work Plan provided will become Exhibit A, and a budget for the funding can be found on page 6 of that Work Plan. The budgeted funding source for this agreement is the City's Redevelopment Fund.

The investment in the Rockford Area Arts Council:

- Strengthens Rockford's creative economy
- Provides safe, high-quality, trauma-informed programs for youth
- Supports the redevelopment of a major historic building (the Armory)
- Expands equitable access to arts & culture and elevates the creative sector as an economic force
- Supports the mental, emotional, and social well-being of children and families
- Establishes long-term sustainability for Rockford's arts & culture ecosystem

The RAAC currently leases the City-owned Shumway Building at 713 E State St, and the proposed lease agreement renews that lease term and is complementary with the funding agreement. The lease continues to provide the use of the Shumway Building to conduct the work of the RAAC as an in-kind contribution. The RAAC is required to utilize the building consistent with the RAAC activities, maintain insurance, and basic building cleaning and upkeep. The lease may be cancelled by either party for any reason with 60 days notice.

Please contact me with any questions at 779-348-7442. Thank you