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Gov. JB Pritzker and Illinois Arts Council Announce Public Art Projects
Twenty-two projects for Illinois' America 250 celebration will reflect diverse narratives and cultural heritage across the state

CHICAGO – Today, the Illinois Arts Council (IAC) in partnership with the Office of the Governor JB Pritzker and Illinois Humanities awarded more than \$325,000 to twenty-two (22) public art projects throughout Illinois to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. These grants are part of a broader statewide effort led by the [Illinois America 250 Commission](#) to celebrate the nation's historic anniversary.

"Illinois is proud to support new public art projects in communities across the state as we celebrate our unique place in the story of America," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "Thanks to these IAC grants, we're helping Illinois' talented creatives bring vibrance to our public spaces, celebrate our local history, and energize our cultural communities."

"Congratulations to the local artists awarded the Illinois America 250 Grant! Art connects and inspires, uplifting voices, histories, and communities whose stories may not otherwise be told," **said Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton**. "Their work helps us better understand the American story and the world around us."

The awarded projects, selected in collaboration with local municipalities and nonprofit organizations, will serve as a public testament to Illinois' creativity and values, celebrating the state's role in the nation's ongoing story. From Elgin to East St. Louis, Effingham to Anna, Marshall to Macomb, and Rock Island to Rockford, these artworks will stand as enduring markers of this historic moment.

Awarded Illinois America 250 Public Art Recipients:

Grantee	Location	Amount
Arts Connection of Central IL	Effingham	\$15,000
ArtsPartners of Central Illinois, Inc.	Peoria	\$15,000

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Batavia Artists Association NFP Inc.	Batavia	\$15,000
Chicago Public Art Group	Chicago	\$15,000
City of Decatur dba Decatur Public Library Fndn	Decatur	\$15,000
City of Macomb	Macomb	\$12,130
City of Pontiac	Pontiac	\$15,000
DeKalb County History Center	Sycamore	\$15,000
East St. Louis Historical Society	East St. Louis	\$15,000
Freeport Arts Center	Freeport	\$15,000
Jacksonville Main Street	Jacksonville	\$15,000
Marshall Public Library	Marshall	\$15,000
Old Town School of Folk Music	Chicago	\$15,000
Olney Arts Council of Illinois	Olney	\$15,000
Quad City Arts	Rock Island	\$15,000
Quincy Society of Fine Arts	Quincy	\$15,000
Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau Fndn	Rockford	\$15,000
Shawnee Hills Arts Council	Anna	\$15,000
Side Street Studio Arts NFP	Elgin	\$15,000
Village of Equality	Equality	\$15,000
Visit Champaign County Foundation	Champaign	\$15,000
Waukegan Park District	Waukegan	\$15,000

“These projects show how art can energize local economies and deepen our sense of place across Illinois,” **said IAC Board Chair Nora Daley**. “Through this investment, we are not only enhancing our public spaces but also fueling economic growth and fostering a vibrant cultural economy that benefits all Illinoisans.”

“These grants offer a unique opportunity for artists across Illinois to bring to life the diverse stories and shared values that have shaped our nation, fostering civic engagement and cultural pride,” **said IAC Executive Director Joshua Davis-Ruperto**. “Through their creativity, we celebrate the diverse stories that define our state and nation, inspiring future generations to engage with our cultural heritage in meaningful ways.”

“Illinois is a place where the American story comes into focus—through our people, our social movements, our diversity, and our creativity,” **said Executive Director of Illinois Humanities and Chair of the Illinois America 250 Commission Gabrielle Lyon**. “These timely investments in our public landscape invite us to see ourselves in that complex story and to carry it forward.”

“We are thrilled the Illinois America 250 Grant is helping us create public art that depicts the true American spirit by honoring the struggle that local 'conductors' in the Underground Railroad movement faced in guiding others to freedom,” **said Judy Tighe, Executive Director of Jacksonville Main Street.** “These heroes risked all for what was right, which is the heart of what America stands for... and what still inspires people today. Jacksonville Main Street looks forward to sharing this inspirational message with all who pass by this mural created by Illinois artist, Carl Scott Lindley.”

“As an integral part of the folk music scene in Chicago and alumnus of the Old Town School, John Prine authored one of the most remarkable songbooks in popular music,” **said Troy Anderson, Executive Director & CEO of Old Town School of Folk Music.** “Thanks to IAC’s Illinois America 250th Public Art grant program, Old Town School is deeply honored to commemorate John’s extraordinary impact in Chicago—and on the world beyond—through a new mural of John sitting proudly with his guitar for all of Chicago to celebrate and enjoy.”

“This opportunity allows us to invest in a lasting public artwork that reflects the identity, creativity, and evolving story of our community,” **said Dr. Mae Gilliland Wright, Executive Director of ArtsPartners of Central Illinois, Inc.** “A large-scale public mural located on West Main Street in Peoria will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.”

As Illinois celebrates this landmark anniversary, communities and organizations are encouraged to become official Illinois America 250 partners. This partnership provides access to valuable resources and promotional support, inviting all Illinoisans to participate in the festivities, whether by engaging in local events, exploring historical sites, or contributing to creative projects.

For more information on how to get involved, visit the Illinois America 250 Commission’s community calendar at www.il250.org/events. Stay tuned for more information on the unveiling of finished projects by connecting with the IAC website: www.arts.illinois.gov, sign up to receive notifications [here](#), and follow the IAC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#).