



Artist Relocation Package

What: The smART Kinston City Project Foundation Artist Relocation Package is designed to incentivize artists to move to the Arts & Cultural District in downtown Kinston. The package includes artistic, business, housing and financial assistance. It also includes qualifying and application information.

In 2013, the smART Kinston City Project Foundation was established to oversee the creation of an Arts & Cultural District in a portion of the historic Mitchelltown Community. This district was created by the Kinston City Council, which approved a zoning overlay plan to allow both residential and limited commercial uses in the same space. There are a variety of living spaces available for rent and sale – houses, apartments and duplexes – and the smART Kinston Foundation will help artists identify which homes are best suited to their needs and what else they might require to meet those needs.

The Arts & Cultural District is part of a broader effort to revitalize downtown Kinston. Steps taken by the City Council include more vigorous enforcement of building codes and streetscape improvements. There also has been significant investment by a private developer. Formerly, many of the structures in the neighborhood were dilapidated and in disrepair. However, many of the long-time residents of the neighborhood are proud of where they live and have been brought into this redevelopment effort and it is now a safe and cohesive neighborhood.

This neighborhood also is within close walking distance of commercial downtown where the world-renown Chef and the Farmer restaurant and the Mother Earth Brewery are anchoring an exciting revitalization. Home to other popular restaurants such as Ginger 108, the Boiler Room, Olvera Street Taqueria, the Queen Street Deli and more, as well as antique shops, the Overland Art Gallery, the wine bar/art gallery Buy Local, the Kinston Community Center for the Arts, the jazz club, J's, and The Red Room, the downtown area is the hub of Kinston's entertainment and cultural events and opportunities, and is becoming a hub for all of eastern North Carolina.

And as if that wasn't enough, the district also is within walking distance from the popular and picturesque Pearson Park along the banks of the Neuse River, as well as the Kinston African-American Music Park, which is the centerpiece of the regional African-American Music Trail. The city's new Arts River Walk also begins just outside the district and will run through it on its eventual path to the Woodmen Community Center/Lion's Water Adventure and the Caswell State Park.

The goal of smART Kinston, therefore, is to make this an all-inclusive neighborhood that is a part of the rest of the downtown area, as well as broader Kinston and Lenoir County.

Who: The smART Kinston City Project Foundation is seeking artists of all genres and mediums to come to downtown Kinston to live and work. Preference will be given to those artists who are considered "established" and who have a track record of sales and success making a living from their art. However, we also will consider new artists, up-and-comers and part-time enthusiasts.

All artists, whether full- or part-time, must demonstrate high quality work in their chosen field/medium. All artists also will be subject to a background check, though criminal convictions do not automatically



disqualify candidates from consideration. If you are not sure your work qualifies as you as an artist, most likely it does, so please submit an application. If you would like some feedback prior to beginning the application process, please [email us](#). Our hope is that our Arts & Cultural District will include a wide diversity of artists from all fields – visual, performance, spoken and written word, as well as culinary, and other genres.

All artists are expected to hold regular studio/gallery hours that are open to the public for sales, tours and simple meet-and-greets. Artists also are asked to give back to the broader Kinston community in a manner that is up to the individual artist based on medium, physical space and current needs. This could include time volunteering at the Arts Council overseeing studio space, time leading classes or workshops, volunteering in the school system or creating public art installations.

How: All information, including an inventory of housing stock, and application is available on the website. Applications can be submitted via the website, while pictures and descriptions of work samples can be [emailed](#) or mailed. Applications are considered year-round as they are received.

The applications will be reviewed by a selection committee. If the candidate makes it to the next round, an interview will be conducted either in-person or via video conferencing. Artists must be accepted by a majority vote of the selection committee.

Artist must sign a year's lease. After the first year, the lease will run month-to-month.



Incentive Package details:

Housing/living: The smART Kinston Foundation offers housing incentives.

Rent in the district is very affordable for the identified homes through smART Kinston LLC. Any renovations on rental homes is at the discretion of smART Kinston LLC.

Homes also are available for purchase from smART Kinston LLC, either outright or through an individualized rent-to-own agreement. However, any purchased home would be under a deed restriction.

- All artists moving to the Arts and Cultural District, whether renting or buying, will receive a \$1,500 move-in grant that can be used for relocation expenses, rent, food, or any other necessary living expense. These funds are not intended to be used for art equipment.
- [The Chamber of Commerce and the Lenoir County Committee of 100 also have relocation packages for new residents](#), whether renting or buying, that includes a package of local gift certificates and discounts.
- If purchasing a home from smART Kinston LLC or the City of Kinston, smART Kinston Foundation will work with artists to help identify what mortgage or commercial loan programs from one of the Foundation's partner financial institutions is right for them.
- If further renovations are needed, smART Kinston also will work with artists to help identify what personal or commercial loan programs from one of the Foundation's partner financial institutions is right for them.
- Self-Help Credit Union is offering a special program for artists relocating to the Arts & Cultural District that reduces the qualifying interest rate by 2% on loans up to \$2,000.

Artistic: The smART Kinston Foundation offers art-based incentives.

The goal of the Arts and Cultural District neighborhood is for artists to live and produce in the neighborhood – in their homes.

- Whether renting or purchasing, smART Kinston Foundation will offer a one-time grant of up to \$1,500 toward the purchase of equipment such as kilns, paints, recording equipment, etc., after submission of an itemized request.
- Self-Help Credit Union is offering a special program for artists relocating to the Arts & Cultural District that reduces the qualifying interest rate by 2% on loans up to \$2,000.
- If equipment costs are higher, smART Kinston will work with artists to help identify what other personal or commercial loan programs from one of the Foundation's partner financial institutions is right for them.
- Artists may apply each year for a \$3,000 competitive grant from the smART Kinston Foundation for projects focusing on public art creation and community involvement. Two of these grants may be awarded each year.

But while the goal of the Arts & Cultural District is in-home studios and galleries, we realize that additional space may be necessary. If that is the case, there are other studio space and gallery



opportunities available in downtown Kinston. At these, rent and other fees are at the discretion of property owner.

At the top of the list is the Kinston Community Council for the Arts. The KCCA offers artists a built-in community of fellow artists and an opportunity to build relationships with both more and less experienced artists. It offers opportunities for exposure through various juried and other (including individual) shows. It offers opportunities for sales through its gift shop. It offers potential studio space and performing space. It, along with smART, can offer assistance with marketing and even specific grant-writing efforts for projects that will impact Kinston and Lenoir County.

There also are a number of other downtown venues that offer opportunities for artists to create and display their work. Overland Gallery offers both studio and gallery space. Buy Local offers gallery space. Local architectural firm Dunn and Dalton is soon opening a historic downtown building that will offer studio space, including room for potential wood and/or metal working. Other downtown businesses looking to create relationships with artists and artisans are Consigned Designs and Beauty Box, both with booth space available, along with many others.

For those interested in the performing arts, the Grainger-Hill Performing Arts Center, Lenoir Community College's Waller Auditorium and the Kinston High School Performing Arts Center all offer venues for musical and stage productions. A more intimate indoor space is available at the Kinston Arts Council, while Pearson Park and the Kinston African-American Music Park offer space for outdoor concerts and other performances.

Business: Being able to make a living off of art is a key component of recruiting artists to Kinston's Art and Cultural District.

In order to facilitate artists' ability to make a living off of their art, there are several organizations that can offer help setting up in-home business models. If at some point in the future, there is enough interest and need from artists to have a larger, communal space, there are commercial building options available.

- To help ensure that all of our artists have an online presence, as well as a way to sell their art beyond Kinston's boundaries, smART Kinston Foundation will offer basic e-commerce webpages through our website. SmART Kinston Foundation can help artists set up and maintain these pages, but they are primarily the artists' responsibility. There is a 25% commission charged on anything sold through the website.
- SmART Kinston Foundation offers basic/in-kind PR/marketing assistance to artists through our social media and print communications, while the KCCA, the Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce and Pride also all offer opportunities for PR/marketing assistance.
- The Lenoir Community College Small Business Center offers classes, workshops and guidance for how artists can turn their craft into a sustainable business models. In addition, the Small Business Center can also help artists access the NC Rural Center's small business loans/grants, as well as other similar programs. Many of the smART Kinston Foundation's financial partners also offer classes/workshops to help people get started right with a focus on risk management, etc.



Apply

Fill out the online form or [email us](#) directly with the required information.

- 1) Full Name
- 2) Address
- 3) Phone
- 4) Email
- 5) Artistic Statement (what kind of art you do and why)
- 6) Artistic Experience (include photos of work samples)
- 7) Personal Statement (why you want to move to Kinston's Arts & Cultural District)
- 8) Work Experience
- 9) References
- 10) Any Felony Convictions and Explanation (not necessarily a disqualifier)
- 11) Social Security Number
- 12) Acknowledgement that a background check will be run