



ORGANIZATION GRANTS INFORMATION GUIDE

REGIONAL ARTS COMMISSION OF ST. LOUIS



2020-2021

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WELCOME

In 1985, the people of St. Louis made a bold decision to invest a portion of hotel/motel tax revenue in the growth and development of arts and culture for the benefit of the region. They envisioned an annually renewable fund that would support a wide range of nonprofit organizations and programs. And, by mandating the program through legislation, they could ensure that everyone would have access to high quality arts and culture experiences for years to come.

In 2020, the Regional Arts Commission celebrates 35 years of delivering on the promise of the groundbreaking legislation by serving as the designated administrator of the fund. For more than three decades, RAC has allocated millions of dollars to worthy arts groups and helped establish St. Louis as an enviable region that values the arts and demonstrates its commitment through mandated public financial support and equally supportive resident participation.

Other communities may debate its civic priorities, but support for the arts is the St. Louis way.

Therefore 2020 is not only a moment of celebration for RAC as we look back on our years of service, but a time to look ahead in an era vastly different from when RAC began. In January 2020, RAC will release a five-year strategic plan to guide our path forward. This, when St. Louisans are grappling with a growing list of complicated challenges, heightened by deep social and economic divides. While the plan centers our work around the core responsibility of grant making, it also repositions RAC as a key contributor to the growth and development of the region through other strategies where the arts can make a difference. We look forward to sharing the specifics of our strategic plan when it is released to the public in January.

As we open the 2020-2021 grant cycle and solicit your applications for funding, we invite you to join us in resetting our calibers and renewing our commitment to the arts – first, by providing St. Louisans with programs of the highest artistic quality. We are proud that our grantees present and produce an abundance of cultural offerings and are prouder that the work is worthy of the local, regional and national recognition it receives.

And beyond the quantity and quality of work you produce, we encourage you to consider how to ensure more people of diverse backgrounds have access to what you do and that the programs you offer are relevant and meaningful to their lives.

Finally, consider how you will advance the operational capacity of your organization so that your organizations become more stable, grow and deliver more boldly on your mission.

RAC began our strategic planning process nearly three years ago with the goal of answering a simple question: “How can the arts play a stronger and more impactful role in making St. Louis a better place to live?” The grants you propose this year and beyond are a response to that question. We look forward to working with you throughout this grant cycle which we know will culminate with the funding of dozens of programs that will create a more healthy, equitable and vibrant St. Louis for everyone.

Sincerely,

Felicia W. Shaw
Executive Director

ABOUT RAC

As the leading public catalyst for arts and culture in the St. Louis region, the mission of the Regional Arts Commission (RAC) is to leverage the power of creativity to strengthen and enrich our community. Founded in 1985 as the result of a legislative mandate, RAC is a quasi-government/non-profit agency which works to promote, encourage and foster the arts in St. Louis City and County. RAC has achieved its purpose by awarding more than 7,000 grants and allocating more than \$100 million to St. Louis-based individual artists, nonprofit arts and culture organizations and other programs, making it the region's largest public funder of the arts. In addition to its primary role as a grant maker, RAC convenes, markets and advocates for arts and culture and implements strategic initiatives that utilize the arts as a tool for social and community change.

RAC is governed by a board of 15 Commissioners appointed by the chief executives of St. Louis City and County and administered by a professional staff. Together, the board and staff work to provide greater access to the highest quality arts, culture and creative experiences for every St. Louisan.

RAC FUNDING

Hotel/Motel Sales Tax

RAC derives its funding from 4/15 of the hotel/motel room sales tax revenue from St. Louis City and County.

CORPORATE FOUNDATION AND SUPPORT

RAC leverages hotel/motel tax revenue and solicits additional funding from private and public charitable organizations, corporate foundations and individuals to achieve its goals.

RAC POLICIES

RAC Freedom of Expression Policy

RAC has an abiding commitment to preserve and enhance freedom of speech, thought, inquiry, and artistic expression. RAC's responsibility for and dedication to securing the conditions through which freedom of expression can flourish extend to all forms of artistic expression including, but not limited to: the visual arts, design, literature, media, and the performance of theatre, music and dance.

RAC recognizes that the right of artists to exhibit or perform does not preclude the right of others to take exception to particular works of art.

RAC Commitment to Diversity, Racial Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion

To ensure a full creative life for every St. Louisan, RAC commits to champion policies and practices that promote diversity, racial equity, accessibility and inclusion in the arts.

To provide informed, authentic leadership for the achievement of this vision, RAC believes that:

- The ability to express, celebrate and champion cultural tradition and heritage is elemental to honest civic discourse and the well-being of our community;
- The assurance of equal opportunity for all people to participate in the arts is a fundamental starting point;
- Cultural programs must be fully accessible and inclusive to every individual, including people with disabilities and older adults;
- Artists and cultural creators have a unique role in challenging inequity and imagining new and more just realities;

- Inequity is pervasive and historic. Disparities and discrimination are daily occurrences rooted in long-standing majority privilege and power inside and outside of the arts;
- Sustained racialized public policies and institutional practices, both conscious and unconscious, have resulted in unequal access to education and resources for people of color. This systemic unequal access to opportunity has resulted in generations of unjust and inequitable outcomes for the community.
- RAC accepts that power has created uneven starting points for some communities and individuals. And while “equality” has become synonymous with “leveling the playing field,” “equity” levels up systems for those who need it.

RAC encourages, supports and strengthens arts organizations and programs that reflect these values and partners with other organizations to address issues of diversity, racial equity, accessibility and inclusion in the arts.

Transparency and Confidentiality at RAC

RAC seeks to make our review process as transparent as possible. Grantees can learn about the process through this information guidebook and from workshops and one-on-one consultations. Application panel review meetings are open to the public to observe and take notes. Panelist names are kept confidential until the panel meeting but are listed on our website once grants are announced. Only the names of applicants that receive grants are announced and posted on our website. Applicants not recommended for funding are notified.

Sunshine Law Compliance

RAC is committed to openness in government and as a quasi-government agency, abide by the Missouri Sunshine Law. Once applications are approved, they become of public record. To make a Sunshine request to obtain records of grant applications, please email grants@racstl.org.

WHAT'S NEW?

The Grants Information Guide has been developed to provide organizations seeking grants in the General Operating Support (GOS) or Program Support grant categories with useful information regarding the entire life cycle of the grant process. It includes background information and instructions that may not be included in the online application. We suggest that you download and review this guide and refer to it as you progress through the online application completion process.

Contained in the Grants Information Guide and outlined below are the significant changes affecting the GOS and Program Support 2020-2021 grant cycle:

APPEALS

Applicants will be invited to the appeals meeting and will have 3-minutes to present a summary of their appeal to the review panel and be available for questions should they arise.

SOCIAL PRACTICE

Social Practice has been added as an artistic discipline. Social practice is an art medium focusing on engagement through human interaction and social discourse. The discipline values the process of a work over any finished product or object. Artists working in social practice co-create their work with a specific audience or propose critical interventions within existing social systems to inspire debate or catalyze social exchange.

FISCAL SPONSORS

Program Support applicants applying under the auspices of a fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply with no requirement to acquire tax-exempt status of their own to remain eligible at any point in the future.

MULTI-YEAR FUNDING FOR QUALIFIED PROGRAM SUPPORT APPLICANTS

Program Support applicants that received a rating of 3+ or higher in the last three consecutive grant cycles (2017-2018; 2018-2019; and 2019-2020), may be eligible for multi-year funding which is determined during the Application Qualification phase of the grant cycle. Multi-year funding increases the capacity for qualifying grantees to plan for the future and decreases the administrative burden of completing full applications every year.

PANEL REVIEW MEETINGS

Panel review meetings will be video-taped, transcribed from the video tape and archived. Applicants will receive written notification of their final rating but will no longer receive staff written and edited notes.

RAC will implement Lead Readers as part of the application review process. Panelists will be asked to read all applications, but each will be assigned a smaller set of the applications to read and lead the discussions during the panel meeting. Lead readers provide a more thorough discussion of the application. All panelists will know in advance who will be the lead readers for each application.

DISBURSEMENTS

For organizations applying to Program Support, RAC will disburse awards to grantees in two rather than three payments.

For grantees at the \$3,000 funding tier, only the current year organizational budget is required. Two additional years of financial statements are no longer required.

APPLICATION WRITING ASSISTANCE

All applicants that need assistance with our process, and particularly new or returning applicants that received low ratings, are strongly encouraged to schedule phone conferences with staff. The dates for when phone conferences with staff will open and close, will be announced. Due to the volume of requests, staff will no longer provide advance reviews of draft applications.

ABOUT GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT (GOS)

The Regional Arts Commission's (RAC) General Operating Support (GOS) grant category supports arts and culture organizations in the production and presentation of high-quality artistic activities that engage diverse audiences within the St. Louis region and beyond.

The GOS grant category provides unrestricted, renewable funding to support the day-to-day operations of nonprofit arts and culture mission-driven organizations that produce and present ongoing, sustainable year-round programming.

The most successful applicants in this funding category share the following qualities:

- A stated and demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion
- Strong administrative oversight and management practices
- Long-range strategic planning
- An appropriate level of cash reserves to sustain the organization from year to year
- A qualified, engaged, and financially supportive board of directors
- Strong community support evidenced by earned and contributed revenue and volunteerism
- Policies and practices that support and engage artists, local and non-local
- Marketing strategies that attract local visitors and cultural tourists
- A commitment to evaluation and continuous improvement
- Resilience to adapt to internal and external changes
- Awareness of St. Louis and the civic issues that impact the lives and well-being of everyone

ELIGIBILITY FOR GOS

A nonprofit arts and culture organization must meet the following eligibility criteria to apply for GOS:

- Arts and culture mission-driven non-profit organization
- Current nonprofit and tax-exempt status in the State of Missouri and 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- A consecutive three-year history of receiving RAC funding through Program Support for incoming applicants
- Employ at least one permanent full-time employee or one permanent full-time-equivalent (FTE)
 - A full-time employee has, on average, at least 30 hours of service per week during the calendar month or at least 130 total hours of service during the calendar month.
 - An FTE employee is a combination of employees, each of whom individually is not full-time, but who, in combination, are equivalent to a full-time employee.
 - An FTE employee receives the IRS Form W-2, whereas independent contractors receive the IRS Form 1099-MISC. Contract workers and seasonal employees do not count toward a FTE. RAC reserves the right to request additional documentation to verify FTE eligibility.
- At least 75% of the organization's programming produced or presented within St. Louis City or St. Louis County
- Produce or present substantial year-round programming that is publicly accessible

An organization may submit only one GOS application under these guidelines.

- Filed IRS Form 990 for at least three consecutive years and has average annual operating expenses (AOE) of \$150,000 or more according to the organization's total functional expenses (IRS Form 990 – Part IX – 25A or IRS Form 990 EZ – Part 1 – 17)
 - Organizations that are close to the \$150,000 minimum will be considered on a case-by-case basis for GOS.

- The majority of the organization’s total functional expenses must be program- or service-related expenses (as determined by the organization’s Form 990 or Form 990 EZ).
- RAC reserves the right to adjust an organization’s AOE depending on extenuating circumstances including, but not limited to, payments to subsidiary organizations and capital campaigns.

RESTRICTIONS – WE DO NOT FUND

- Educational institutions including schools (charter, private, or public), childcare centers, colleges and universities are ineligible to apply. Organizations that are closely affiliated with such institutions should contact RAC prior to submitting an application and be prepared to provide additional information if requested.
- Faith-based or religiously-affiliated organizations are in-eligible to apply in GOS but may apply in Program Support.

GOS GRANT SCHEDULE – OFF CYCLE

GOS is currently off-cycle. GOS grantees are currently completing a two-year grant cycle that began July 1, 2019 and ends June 30, 2021. Applications for the next two-year grant cycle will open in the fall of 2020 to receive funding beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2023. Exact dates and deadlines for the next two-year grant cycle to be announced.

GOS grantees completing their two-year grant cycle are required to submit mid-cycle reporting in June 2020 at the end of the 2019-2020 grant cycle to remain eligible for funding for the following year. Information regarding the reporting requirements will be shared by the beginning of 2020. For additional information regarding GOS during this off-cycle, contact grants@racstl.org.

ABOUT PROGRAM SUPPORT

The Regional Arts Commission's (RAC) Program Support grant category provides project-based support to arts and culture organizations and non-arts nonprofit organizations in the production and presentation of high-quality artistic activities. These ongoing and one-time projects broaden and deepen audience participation and increase access to the arts for visitors and residents throughout the St. Louis region.

Note: First-time applicants to RAC's funding programs must first apply in Program Support and establish a three-year track record within this category before gaining eligibility to apply to GOS.

Program Support fund projects meeting the following conditions:

- A project may consist of one or more specific events or activities; it may be part of or all of an applicant's regular season or activities. Applicants that undertake a single short-term project in a year – a ten-day jazz festival, for example – could apply for the event, or they could identify certain components (such as the presentation of a key artist and the associated activities) as their project.
- Applicants may apply for any or all phases of a project, from its planning through its implementation.
- Projects may be new and untested or ongoing with proven track records.
- Projects do not need to be large. RAC welcomes small-scale projects that can make a difference in a community or artistic field.
- Projects may cover a broad range of singular and multiple artistic disciplines.

PROGRAM SUPPORT APPLICATION CATEGORIES

Arts and Culture Programs

Performances, concerts, exhibitions, readings, publications, arts education, and other similar programs

Cultural Festivals, Parades and Special Events

Events that enhance the economic vitality of St. Louis and increase the region's visibility and desirability as a destination for out of town visitors

Community Arts Programs

Programs using the arts as a tool for social change and civic engagement

PROGRAM SUPPORT GRANT TIERS/AWARDS

Eligible organizations can apply for funding in four discrete grant tiers. The maximum amount of funding that an organization can receive from each of these tiers is \$15,000, \$10,000, \$5,000, or \$3,000. The grant tiers are based on the overall program or project cost and require a minimum of a 1:1 cash match.

Therefore, an organization with project expenses of \$30,000 or more can apply for a \$15,000 grant; with project expenses of \$20,000 or more can apply for a \$10,000 grant; with \$10,000 or more can apply for a \$5,000 grant; and, with project expenses of \$6,000 or more can apply for a \$3,000 grant. In-kind expenses will only count towards the cash match at the \$3,000 grant tier.

If an applicant has received a RAC grant in the past but has not met the required program expenses or income to be eligible in the grant tier in which they were awarded, RAC may restrict which grant tier an applicant can apply for in future grant applications.

MATCHING FUNDS

All Program Support grant awards require a minimum of a 1:1 cash match and must maintain the required program/project cost for the discrete grant tier. Matching funds should come from other cash revenue sources such as the grantee organization’s own funds (general revenue), other public and private funding, board and corporate contributions, and earned revenue, etc. Therefore, if an organization receives an award at the maximum eligible funding level, 100%, the required cash match is 1:1 and if an organization receives the minimum eligible funding level, 50%, the required cash match ratio increases to 3:1. See the charts below as an example and for more detail.

\$15,000 Grants				
Program Cost		\$30,000	or More	
Max Grant		\$15,000	1 : 1 Match	
Min Grant		\$7,500	3 : 1 Match	
Funding Increments	Rating	% Eligible	Grant Award	Required Match
	4	100%	\$15,000	\$15,000
	4 -	90%	\$13,500	\$16,500
	3 +	80%	\$12,000	\$18,000
	3	70%	\$10,500	\$19,500
	3 -	60%	\$9,000	\$21,000
	2 +	50%	\$7,500	\$22,500

\$10,000 Grants				
Program Cost		\$20,000	or More	
Max Grant		\$10,000	1 : 1 Match	
Min Grant		\$5,000	3 : 1 Match	
Funding Increments	Rating	% Eligible	Grant Award	Required Match
	4	100%	\$10,000	\$10,000
	4 -	90%	\$9,000	\$11,000
	3 +	80%	\$8,000	\$12,000
	3	70%	\$7,000	\$13,000
	3 -	60%	\$6,000	\$14,000
	2 +	50%	\$5,000	\$15,000

\$5,000 Grants				
Program Cost		\$10,000	or More	
Max Grant		\$5,000	1 : 1 Match	
Min Grant		\$2,500	3 : 1 Match	
Funding Increments	Rating	% Eligible	Grant Award	Required Match
	4	100%	\$5,000	\$5,000
	4 -	90%	\$4,500	\$5,500
	3 +	80%	\$4,000	\$6,000
	3	70%	\$3,500	\$6,500
	3 -	60%	\$3,000	\$7,000
	2 +	50%	\$2,500	\$7,500

\$3,000 Grants				
Program Cost		\$6,000	or More	
Max Grant		\$3,000	1 : 1 Match	
Min Grant		\$1,500	3 : 1 Match	
Funding Increments	Rating	% Eligible	Grant Award	Required Match
	4	100%	\$3,000	\$3,000
	4 -	90%	\$2,700	\$3,300
	3 +	80%	\$2,400	\$3,600
	3	70%	\$2,100	\$3,900
	3 -	60%	\$1,800	\$4,200
	2 +	50%	\$1,500	\$4,500

ELIGIBILITY FOR PROGRAM SUPPORT

An organization is eligible to apply for Program Support provided that it meets the following requirements:

- Nonprofit and tax-exempt status: In “good status” as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Missouri and 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or be a unit of federal or local government such as a library, county, or municipal agency.
- Local focus: Arts programs and projects must occur in St. Louis City or St. Louis County.
- Grant Cycle: Arts programs and projects must occur during the applicable grant cycle.
- The proposed program’s primary purpose must be the creation or utilization of art.
- RAC funds ongoing programs and projects. RAC defines a program as a specific, identifiable project, event, or event series that has a distinct and consistent focus, format, and objective. Programs and projects may be large or small, existing or new, ongoing or one-time events. They may take place in any publicly accessible venue in St. Louis City or County.
- An organization may submit only one application per grant cycle.
- A first-time applicant to RAC is eligible to apply only at the \$3,000 and \$5,000 grant tier regardless of the project budget

RESTRICTIONS – WE DO NOT FUND

- Programs, projects, or events not accessible to the public
- Grants to individuals, including artists (Individual artists with project ideas should apply to RAC’s Artist Support Program)
- Educational institutions, including schools, childcare centers, colleges, and universities, are ineligible to apply. Organizations that are closely affiliated with such institutions are encouraged to contact RAC prior to applying to ensure eligibility.
- Projects for which the selection of artists or art works is based upon criteria other than artistic excellence and merit. Examples include festivals, exhibitions, publications or performances for which no jury/audition/curatorial judgment has been applied.
- Benefits, fundraisers or awards programs
- Programs that are part of a religious service
- Political advocacy
- Construction, purchase, or renovation of facilities. (Design fees, preparing space for an exhibit, installation or de-installation of art, and community planning are eligible)
- Cash reserves or endowments
- Deficit or debt reduction efforts
- Tuition assistance
- Costs of receptions and social activities, except when they are incidental and related to arts activities

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

Fiscal Sponsorship Policy

New and emerging arts organizations are eligible to apply with a fiscal sponsor (agent) in Program Support at the \$5,000 and \$3,000 grant levels, provided that:

- The fiscal sponsor is a nonprofit corporation in the State of Missouri with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and has a strong history of arts programming or has tax-exempt status from the IRS with a fiscal sponsorship-based mission; and

Fiscal Sponsorship Requirements

Applicants applying under the auspices of a fiscal sponsor must attach as part of the application, a letter signed by the sponsoring organization executive director endorsing the application. The letter must provide an explanation of how the project aligns with the sponsoring organization's mission and that the board is aware of and supportive of the sponsoring relationship. The letter must also specify the flat fee or percentage charged for the sponsorship service. The typical range for sponsorship fees is between 9% and 15% of project expenses.

Fiscal Sponsorship Contract or Memorandum of Understanding

If an application is funded, RAC requires that the applicant and the fiscal sponsor provide a signed copy of the written fiscal sponsorship contract or memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the signed grant agreement. The fiscal sponsorship contract or MOU must be signed by the executive director and board chair and should address the following:

- Parties involved
- Project description
- Artist program responsibilities
- Services provided by fiscal sponsor
- Risk management, liability, and insurance
- Ownership, content and artistic control
- Fundraising
- Publicity and credit
- Reporting
- Administrative fee
- Tax-exempt status
- Termination
- Dispute resolution

PROGRAM SUPPORT APPLICATION SUBMITTAL PROCESS

The Program Support grant application cycle includes the following steps:

- Complete the Program Support pre-qualification process available through grants.racstl.org in early November and due mid-December. Eligible organizations will be notified after completing the qualifying process and invited to submit an application.
 - Group application writing workshops will be held in January 2020.
 - Staff provides one-on-one consultations via phone. Organizations that are new to the process or that received low ratings in the previous grant cycle are strongly encouraged to take advantage of staff phone consultations.
- Submit application by early February due date.
 - Once submitted, all applications are reviewed by RAC staff for eligibility and completeness.
 - Applications deemed substantially incomplete (missing key components, such as budgets, program narratives or timelines, etc.), will not be reviewed and eliminated from the process.
 - On a case-by-case basis, staff may allow errors and omissions in applications submitted prior to the deadline to be corrected, provided that the application deadline can still be met.
- Review Panel evaluates and rates applications using the review criteria and rating scale.
 - Applicants are encouraged to attend and observe the Review Panel meeting.

- Review panel meetings will be videotaped, transcribed and shared with the applicant.
- The average rating of all panelist scores will be sent to the applicants shortly after the panel review meeting.
- Applicants may appeal their rating given appropriate grounds. Applicants filing appeals are invited to present their appeal to the Review Panel via phone conference and to be available for questions should they arise.
- The Grants Committee, a subcommittee of RAC’s Board of Commissioners, makes final recommendations based on the Review Panel’s ratings and available funds.
- RAC’s Board of Commissioners votes on the recommendations made by the Grants Committee.
- Public announcement of grant awards will be made after the full Commission meets and approves the awards.
- Program Support programs being July 1, 2020.

GRANT REVIEW CRITERIA

Program Support applicants will respond to the following review criteria:

Artistic Merit and Quality of Programs

- Quality of the artists, arts organizations, arts education providers, works of art, or services that the project will involve, as appropriate
- Artistic significance of the project and importance of the project to the artistic field, artists, audience, community and/or constituency
- Demonstrated commitment to recruit, engage and directly compensate qualified and experienced artists
- Distinctive and unique programming that enriches cultural offerings and/or preserves cultural traditions in St. Louis
- A loyal audience base evidenced by attendance numbers, community support, and ticket sales (as applicable)
- Ongoing commitment to program planning and development best practices, including goal setting, marketing, budgeting and evaluation

Community Benefit

- Demonstrated commitment to community engagement and the use of community knowledge and relationships to make informed and relevant programming decisions
- Demonstrated and intentional efforts to attract and retain diverse audiences and increase access to the arts to under-served individuals or under-resourced neighborhoods
- Demonstrated efforts to contribute to the vibrancy, safety, and economic vitality of neighborhoods, communities or the entire St. Louis region

Organizational Capacity

- Quality and clarity of the project goals and design, the resources involved, and the qualifications of the project’s staff and volunteers
- An engaged and diverse board of directors that contributes financially to the organization
- A project budget that is realistic, appropriate to the scope of the project, and that reflects a diversity of funding sources
- History of successful arts and culture programming and demonstration of short and long-term planning (if appropriate)
- Appropriate marketing efforts given the program’s size and scale
- Effective management of past RAC grant(s)

RATING SYSTEM

Each application will be rated according to RAC's review criteria. RAC uses a four-point rating system with steps between each rating (4, 4-); (3+, 3, 3-); (2+, 2, 2-) and, (1).

An applicant's rating is used to determine funding. Applicants that receive a rating of 4 are considered model – meeting all review criteria in an exemplary fashion; a rating of 4 is considered a rare achievement. Applicants that receive a rating of 3 are considered good, but some development is needed. Applicants that receive a rating of 2 are considered in need of significant improvement in multiple areas and are marginally fundable. Depending upon the availability of funds, applicants with ratings of 2+, 2 or 2- may not be recommended for funding. Organizations that receive a rating of 1 do not meet RAC criteria and will not be recommended for funding under any circumstance.

Program Support is a competitive application process. Regardless of ratings received, funding is not guaranteed and awarded funding may vary for returning applicants from year to year based on a number of variables - available funds; the number of applicants in the pool; total funds requested; and, the ratings of each individual applicant relative to one another.

Every application will be reviewed and rated according to RAC's three review criteria Artistic Merit and Quality, Community Benefit and Organizational Capacity.

Each organization will receive a 10% reduction from the maximum funding level for each step down in rating. For example, if an organization is applying for a \$15,000 grant and receives a rating of 4, they will receive 100% of the maximum funding level or the full \$15,000. If an organization applying at the same \$15,000 level receives a rating of 3, they are eligible for 70% of the maximum funding level, or \$10,500.

NAVIGATING THE ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis of St. Louis (RAC) requires all applicants to submit proposal information online via grants.racstl.org.

All applicants will be assigned a unique log-in for their account. Returning applicants that have forgotten their log-in credentials should contact grants@racstl.org.

1. To begin, click Sign-Up found on the bottom right corner of the grants.racstl.org home screen.
2. Complete the account information page and click Create Account.
3. Check your email for an account activation link.
4. Complete the Applicant Setup
5. Click on View Grant Applications to determine your eligibility

NOTE: If there are no applications available in the View Grants section, then either the application period has not started or the information you provided did not meet the eligibility requirements.

PRE-QUALIFICATION FORM

Once the Applicant Setup form is completed, the system will confirm your eligibility to move forward to the Eligibility process. If approved to move forward, you will receive instructions via email on how to access the application.

TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE ONLINE SYSTEM

To make your experience using grants.racstl.org more successful, here are a few tips:

Saving and Drafting Your Work

- The grant application system organizes your application into a set of tasks. After you open a task you may “save” your progress; marking a task as complete will also save your work. Always save your progress before logging out of the system.
- Drafting a copy of as much of your work in a separate document will ensure that you have a backup of your application content. Be mindful of word and character limits for narrative sections of your application if you plan to cut and paste your information into the system.

Formatting Your Text

Although you can copy and paste text into the online application system, formatting features (i.e. bold, italic, underline, etc.) will not transfer. Use other ways to emphasize your words such as quotation marks, capitalization, or numbering.

Sharing Access

The application system allows more than one person to edit and/or view your unsubmitted application. You may invite via email other collaborators with the “Invite Collaborators” task. Avoid inviting peers to use your login credentials.

CAUTION: Members of your grant writing team may work on different sections of the application simultaneously but should not work on the same section at the same time, as changes may be lost.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA USES AND DEFINITIONS

The Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis (RAC) works to ensure that the arts, which are essential to a healthy and democratic society, are accessible to everyone. This means making intentional efforts to encourage, incentivize and reward grantees who create more diverse, racially equitable, accessible and inclusive (DEI) programs and places for people to experience the arts. We understand that many of our grantees are on a continuum in terms of making and keeping their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

One way that RAC tracks the collective progress of its grantees as it relates to DEI efforts is by gathering demographic data on grantee audiences, staff and volunteers. To ensure that data is tracked in a consistent and standardized manner, RAC has made reporting DEI data an application requirement.

RAC recognizes that collecting and ensuring the reliability of demographic data is a task that requires commitment and an investment of time and money and that the data – even if reliable - only tells a very small part of an organization’s story. Still, as RAC continues its efforts to bring the arts into the lives of more people, RAC believes that data that at least provides a “snapshot” of who is benefitting from the region’s rich cultural resources is worth collecting and tracking.

The demographic data reported will enable the review panelists to provide feedback and encouragement to organizations whose DEI efforts are working or stalling. Staff will also use the data to inform the development of capacity building programs to help everyone do a better job of developing robust DEI strategies that make a difference. The data could be used to benchmark St. Louis against other like-sized cities as a way of measuring progress toward national goals.

Race

The following racial categories generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in the United States and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race.

NOTE: RAC utilizes the same categories and definitions as the [United States Census Bureau](#).

American Indian or Alaska Native – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

Asian or Asian-American – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Black or African American – A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

White – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Ethnicity

The US Census Bureau defines “Hispanic or Latino” as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. Both Hispanic and Latino/a are based on language. Latino/a refers to a person of a culture or origin of Latin America, which is defined as the group of countries and dependencies in the Americas where romance languages are predominant. In the United States this is typically simplified to refer to any country south of the United States. Hispanic refers to a person of a culture or origin from a Spanish-speaking country.

BUDGET DEFINITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

In all cases, Program Support expenses included in the budget should tie directly to the expenses required to implement the proposed program. General Operating Support applicants include overall expenses for the organization.

Administration Overhead

GOS: Indirect costs include expenditures associated with running the organization as a whole, such as administrative staff salaries, rent, utilities, office supplies, etc. which for GOS applicants are specified in other parts of the budget.

Program Support: Calculate a percentage of these costs for your program, but do not include 100% of the costs of these items in your budget. Indirect costs are expected to be reasonable given the size and scope of the project. A note in the budget narrative may be necessary to explain indirect costs that exceed 10% of the project budget.

Contracted Services

Include non-employees contracted to perform services for the program or organization.

Equipment

GOS: If your organization owns equipment (nonexpendable, tangible property, considered assets) include depreciation costs here.

Program Support: RAC allows incidental equipment purchases to be included in the expense budget. However, these expenses generally should not exceed 10% of the overall program budget. Explain equipment rentals and purchases in the budget narrative.

Evaluation

Include organization or direct program-related costs for evaluation activities. May include purchasing survey-making software subscriptions or hiring external evaluators.

Insurance

Include costs related to providing adequate insurance for the organization or the program that are over and beyond the cost for the organization.

Marketing

Include organization or direct program-related costs associated with marketing, advertising, and the promotion of your organization or program. May include the development of websites.

Meetings

Include costs associated with holding (or attending) a meeting for the organization or project; for example, facility or equipment rental fees, food and beverage, materials, etc.

Occupancy (rent, utilities, maintenance)

GOS: Include rent, utilities, maintenance or mortgage expenses. If you own your facility, include depreciation costs here.

Program Support: Direct program expenses (total or a percentage) required to implement the program.

Other Expenses

Other expenses should not exceed 10% of your overall program budget and must be detailed in your budget narrative

Printing, Copying & Postage

Include photocopying, printing, mailings, postage, and express mail charges for the organization or direct costs for the program.

Salary & Benefits

Include expenses for all the people of the organization or working on the program. Include payroll taxes (FICA, Medicare, unemployment, and workers' compensation) and fringe benefits such as health insurance.

Program Support: Programs that cite one individual paid to perform services in multiple key positions are allowed but may not be considered managerially sound.

Supplies

Include minor consumable purchases.

Training & Professional Development

Include costs required to train and develop staff, board and volunteers for the program or organization.

Travel

Include local and non-local costs: airfare, ground transportation, per diem, lodging, mileage for personal vehicle usage, etc.

SUPPORT MATERIALS

Documentation is required for evaluating the artistic merit and quality of the applicant’s programs. A minimum of one, but no more than two artistic work sample files must be uploaded in the application.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

DOCUMENTATION TYPE	ACCEPTED FORMS	REQUIREMENTS
Audio Samples	.mp3 .mp4 .wma .wav .acc .m4a .flac	Up to 5 minutes
Image Samples	.pdf .jpg .png .bmp .gif .jpeg	Up to 10 images (suggested format, .pdf presentation with one image per slide. Include title, artist and date)
Published Materials	.pdf	Up to 5 sample pages
Video	.AVI YouTube link Vimeo link .mp4 .mpg .mpeg .wmv .mov .flv .f4v	Up to 5 minutes

The following are discipline-specific requirements for artistic work sample submissions

DISCIPLINE	IMAGES	PUBLISHED MATERIALS	VIDEO	AUDIO SAMPLES
Architecture	.	.		
Arts Education	.	.	.	
Craft and Traditional Art	.		.	
Dance			.	
Design	.	.		
Literature		.		
Media Arts	.	.	.	
Multi-Disciplinary	.		.	.
Music			.	.
Presenting			.	
Social Practice	.		.	.
Theatre			.	
Visual Arts	.	.		

NOTE: Do not submit promotional materials as artistic documentation. Preview the artistic documentation files before and after uploading to ensure that there are no technical problems that might interfere with the panel’s review of the work. Panelists generally spend no more than three to five minutes on the work sample(s) for each application. However, please be aware that the entire sample (not just the selected segment) is considered part of the application and may be reviewed.

REQUIRED FINANCIAL FORMS

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

GOS applicants must submit the following documents:

- A .pdf copy of your organization's current and board approved budget
- Financial statements from the past two years including a statement of activities (profit and loss statement) and statement of financial position (balance sheet of assets and liabilities)
- Most recent audit, if applicable.

NOTE: Only organizations with an annual operating budget of \$1.5 million or more are required to provide their most recently completed audited financial statement report

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Program Support applicants must submit the following documents:

- A .pdf copy of your organization's current and board approved budget
- Financial statements from the most recently completed fiscal year including a statement of activities (profit and loss statement) and statement of financial position (balance sheet of assets and liabilities)
 - For organizations applying under a fiscal sponsorship, you should provide your sponsoring organization's documentation.
 - For organizations applying in the \$3,000 funding category, only the current-year board approved budget is required.

PANEL REVIEW PROCESS

Review Panelists play a central role in the Regional Arts Commission's annual grant making process. Each year, RAC invites dozens of local residents representing a broad and diverse range of artistic and cultural viewpoints, professions, and backgrounds to serve on panels and assist with the evaluation of grant applications.

Review Panelists commit to the following:

- Attend an orientation meeting to learn how to review the applications according to the guidelines and review criteria.
- Read the assigned applications, including videos, photos, recordings or other work samples prior to the meeting
- Attend a meeting with other panelists to discuss and rate the applications in a one or two-day public meeting
- Hear appeals, if necessary, and render a final rating.
- Provide feedback on the application review process so that it can improve.
- Attend programs throughout the year as a way to continue learning about St. Louis's arts and culture community.

Review panelists are offered a modest honorarium as a demonstration of RAC's appreciation for the time and effort invested in this work.

PANELIST NOMINATION PROCESS

Panelists are nominated to serve as reviewers through a public process. An individual may self-nominate to serve or recommend others by completing a simple application. Staff reviews the nominations and makes selections according to need, talent, and the panelists' availability. Panelists may serve up to three years to ensure that there is always a steady and rotating pool of talented panelists from which to choose.

RAC staff manage the application process and provide panelists with online access to the applications and work samples several weeks prior to the public meeting. Panelists then read the applications, review the work samples, and make preliminary assessments. On a designated day, panelists meet as a group to discuss and assign final ratings to the applications.

To ensure that panelists are reviewing each application fairly, they are required to declare any conflict of interest with organizations that are applying for funding after they are nominated, and the applications are assigned. In the event of a conflict of interest, panelists are required to recuse themselves from the discussion and voting on that application during the panel meeting.

PANEL MEETINGS

Panel meetings are open to the public and applicants are encouraged to attend. This is an important learning process for applicants as they are able to receive valuable feedback on their organization or program from individuals with expertise and diverse backgrounds. While applicants may observe panel proceedings and take notes, they are not allowed to address the panel during the deliberations.

Panel meetings are video-taped, transcribed and shared with the applicants at the end of the panel and prior to appeals.

After the panelists participate in a group discussion of each application, using the review criteria as a guide, they are each asked to render a numerical rating based on a four-point rating scale that they feel provides an overall assessment of the application's merit. The ratings are then totaled and averaged to arrive at a final rating. This numerical rating is part of the formula that determines the amount of funding an applicant will receive.

After all applications have been discussed and rated, staff will present to the panelists a spreadsheet of all the ratings from highest to lowest for final review.

APPEALS PROCESS

In addition to reading applications and serving on the panel, panelists will be asked to participate in the appeals process. After applicants receive their organization's final ratings, they have the right to appeal if they believe that an error was made during the review that adversely affected their final rating.

Applicants must have solid grounds for an appeal for it to be considered. Dissatisfaction with a rating or denial of an award is not sufficient ground for an appeal. Solid grounds for an appeal are based on a misstatement of fact made during the panel meeting that can be evidenced by written information found in the application. New information not originally included in the application can't be offered as evidence of the misstatement. RAC staff reviews and approves all requests for appeals before referring to the panel for consideration. Appeals may not move forward without staff approval. However, staff approval does not guarantee that the appeal will be approved by the review panel.

The panelists who reviewed the application are sent the applicant's written appeal in advance of the meeting accompanied by a statement prepared by staff validating the appeal. The meeting is conducted via phone conference. The applicant may attend the appeal hearing and make a summary statement of up to 3 minutes. The applicant may remain in the meeting to answer questions if any arise. Using Roberts Rules of Order, the panelists may vote in favor (majority rules) of approving an increase to the final rating. The results of the meeting are shared with the applicant in writing immediately following the meeting.

OTHER DUTIES

RAC encourages panelists to stay involved with the applicants after their panel service is completed. Staff enables panelists to attend performances and exhibitions by sharing the panelists' contact information with the grantees who in turn may send the panelists announcements about their work and complimentary tickets when they are available. Both RAC and RAC grantees appreciate panelists, particularly those who intend to volunteer as panelists in the future, who wish to learn more about the funded organizations by seeing their programs first-hand.

DISBURSEMENTS AND PAYMENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Grant awards for GOS and Program Support are disbursed through automatic deposit to the grantee's designated bank account. An Authorization Agreement for Automatic Deposits (ACH Credits) form must be completed and submitted to RAC along with a voided check from the organization's bank account to set up the process. Please log in to grants.racstl.org to access the ACH Authorization forms. If you have trouble accessing these documents, please contact grants@racstl.org.

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

GOS grant payments are made monthly through automatic deposit in a series of 12 payments starting late July and ending late June of the designated grant cycle.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Program Support grant payments are made through automatic deposit in a series of 2 payments. Below is an explanation of each of the disbursement requirements.

2020-2021 Program Support Disbursement #1

To receive the first disbursement, which is two-thirds of the award, you must submit a signed copy of the RAC agreement; a copy of your fiscal sponsorship agreement (if applicable); and, enter your organization's program or event on [RAC's Arts and Culture Events calendar](#). You must submit the first disbursement request by June 30, 2020.

2020-2021 Program Support Disbursement #2

To receive the final disbursement, which is the remaining third of the award, you must submit the request *no later than 6 weeks* after the completion of the funded program. The request must be accompanied by a report of your program's successes and challenges and an accounting of actual program expenses and income.

NOTE: Organization may forfeit all or part of the grant award if disbursement requests are not received within the required timeline; did not meet the program funding tier expenditure requirements; and/or did not complete the approved program as proposed. If extreme circumstances prevent completion of the disbursement requests on time, or major changes to the program have occurred contact grants@racstl.org to request a consultation with a Program Manager.

GLOSSARY

Annual Operating Expense (AOE)	An organization's AOE is generally calculated by totaling an organization's expenditures from the last completed fiscal year. The AOE is an important variable in determining General Operating Support (GOS) funding eligibility.
Applicant	An applicant in GOS or Program Support is a nonprofit organization that has submitted an application to receive funding from RAC.
Art Education	Field of educational practice informed by investigations into learning through in and through arts experiences. Art education may benefit both adults as a form of life-long learning or youth.
Artist	An individual generally recognized by critics and peers as a professional practitioner of the visual, performing, or literary arts, or a combination thereof.
Arts	The arts encompass visual disciplines (i.e. painting, sculpture, design, photography, printing, mosaic, video, film, mixed-media, textiles, etc.), performing disciplines (i.e. music, theater, dance, spoken word, etc.) and literary disciplines (i.e. poetry, fiction, non-fiction, etc.).
Board of Directors/Trustees	The board of directors or trustees govern the organization's assets and ensure that the nonprofit is well managed and remains fiscally sound.
Commissioner	A volunteer appointed by the mayor of the City of St. Louis and the county executive of St. Louis County to serve as the board of directors of RAC.
Community	The constituents (audience, participants, neighbors and beneficiaries) the applicant intends to serve.
Cultural Tourism	A subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s) and other elements that helped shape their way of life.
Demographics	Quantifiable characteristics of a given population. Can cover whole societies or groups defined by criteria such as education, race, age, gender, religion, and ethnicity
Diversity	Understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These differences can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.
Endowment	A donation of money or property to a nonprofit organization for the ongoing support of that organization.

Equity	Increasing access to opportunity, networks, resources, and supports—based on need and other determinants.
Fiscal Sponsor or Agent	An incorporated nonprofit (tax-exempt) organization that provides administrative and financial services for projects initiated by unincorporated nonprofit organizations or incorporated nonprofit organizations that do not have financial or administrative capabilities.
Grantee	A grantee is an individual artist or nonprofit organization that has submitted an application or other form of review and has been approved for RAC funding.
Inclusion	Inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging.
In-kind Contribution	In-kind contributions are the value of goods or services donated to an organization either as volunteer staff time or goods donated by vendors to the organization.
Nonprofit Organization	Organizations that have tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).
RAC	Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis.

TIMELINE

GOS GRANT SCHEDULE

Mid-Cycle Reporting.....	June 2020
Pre-Qualification Process Opens.....	Fall 2020
Application Opens.....	Winter 2020
Staff Phone Consultations.....	Winter 2020 /Spring 2021
Application Deadline.....	Spring 2021
GOS Panel Review.....	Spring 2021
Appeals Due.....	One week after panel meetings conclude
Grants Committee Review.....	One week prior to Commission approval
Commission Approval.....	June 2021
Grant Cycle Starts.....	July 01, 2021
Grant Cycle Ends.....	June 30, 2023

PROGRAM SUPPORT GRANT SCHEDULE

Grant Cycle – Single-Year Applicants: July 1, 2020 – June 31, 2021

Grant Cycle – Multi-Year Applicants: July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 and July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Pre-Qualification Process Opens.....	November 8, 2019
Pre-Qualification Deadline.....	December 10, 2019
Notification of Eligibility.....	December 19, 2019
Applications Available.....	December 20, 2019
Application Writing Workshops.....	January 8 and 14, 2020
Staff Phone Consultations.....	January 27-31, 2020
Application Deadline.....	February 6, 2020
Review Panel Meetings.....	March 17 – April 2, 2020
Appeals Process.....	Appeals due within one week after panel review meeting
Commission Vote on Awards.....	May 14, 2020
Award Announcements.....	June 9, 2020
Grant Cycle Starts.....	July 01, 2020

CONTACTS

REGIONAL ARTS COMMISSION STAFF

Executive Leadership

Felicia Shaw, Executive Director

Sherry Sissac, Deputy Director

Erika Fiola, Director, Strategic Initiatives and Community Partnerships

Olivia Lahs-Gonzales, Interim Director, Artist Programs and Services

Program Managers

Sarah Frye, Program Manager – Strategic Initiatives

Emily Parker, Program Manager – Grants

Morgan Hill, Program Manager – Artist Programs and Services

Chloe Smith, Program Coordinator

Administrative Staff

Stanford Griffith, Marketing Communications Manager

Yvonne Holland, Systems Administrator

Facilities Management

Marcus Westbrooks, Facilities Manager

Stephen Da Lay, Building Coordinator

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Executive Committee

Mont Levy, Chairman

Cheryl D.S. Walker, Vice Chairman

Andrea Purnell, Secretary

John H. Russell, Treasurer

Michael Scully, Member at Large

Commissioners

Eva Frazer

Rosalind Johnson

Vinfung “Vin” Ko

Cynthia K. Kohlbray

Adewale Soluade

Kellie Trivers

Mary Walsh

David Carl Wilson

CONTACT INFORMATION

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For general inquires regarding Grants, contact grants@racstl.org