# Welcome!

## We will get started shortly. Please take a seat and review the agenda.

Agenda:

- Team Introductions
- RAC Priorities
- Workshops
- Grant Overview
- Timeline
- Accessing the Application
- Application Overview

- Review Criteria
- Application Questions
- Writing Narratives
- Uploads
- FAQs
- Contact Information/Technical Assistance
- Q&A!

Artica

# Completing the Organizational Grant Application:

A grant presentation for non-profit arts and culture organizations

# RAC Priorities

# Mission and Vision

As the leading public catalyst for arts and culture in St. Louis, the Regional Arts Commission leverages the power of creativity to strengthen and enrich our community.

RAC envisions:

◦ A full creative life for every St. Louisan

◦ St. Louis as a growing and captivating arts and culture destination

◦ A community rich with opportunities and resources that promote and sustain artists

# Guiding Principles

We invest in the region's arts and culture through our grants, programs, and special initiatives

We believe in diversity, racial equity, accessibility and inclusion

We build partnerships that strengthen our community

We are passionate champions that support and recognize artists

We believe every child deserves a well-rounded education that includes the arts

# Core Values

Our core values embody our culture, spirit, and dedication to living our mission. They keep us grounded and help us make good decisions about everything we do.

We are:

Passionate champions for arts and culture.

Accountable stewards of the public trust.

Committed to practices that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Socially and civically engaged community catalysts.

Servant leaders.

# RAC's mission, vision, guiding principles, and core values are a balance between

- Our passion and interests
- The needs of our community

The Grants Committee and Grants Team worked to be sure our new grants cycle reflects our mission, vision, principles, and core values…which helps ensure our process runs smoothly (as smoothly as possible!)

# You may have questions…

As questions come up throughout the workshop, please note your questions.

In the next slide we will review the recorded workshops and where to access resources.

Please save your questions for the Q&A at the end of this workshop or plan to attend office hours to get some answers!

# RAC Workshops

**Recorded Workshops**

Basic Grant Application Writing-  *All Applicants*

Artist Statements- *Individual Artists Grant Applicants*

Building your Application Budget- *All Applicants*

*The 2024 workshops are available on the RAC website.*
***Note: the dates in the recorded workshops are from 2024 and not accurate for 2025. Please review the 2025 timeline.***

# Organizational Grant Overview

# What is the Organizational Grant?

The Regional Arts Commission's (RAC) Organizational Grant provides a one-year, unrestricted, and flexible organizational and/or program grant to arts and culture organizations in the production and/or presentation of artistic activities.

RAC expects these grants to be utilized to broaden and deepen audience/community participation and increase access to the arts for visitors and residents throughout the St. Louis region.

Dances of India

A Call to Conscience

**IS ORGANIZATIONAL GRANT RIGHT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?**

- Organization requires working capital to sustain their day-to-day operations to support operational needs like salaries, technology, and overhead.

- Organization strives to build fundraising, planning, and other systems to strengthen their funding sources and sustain the organization over time.

- Organization aspires to build a strong and sustainable infrastructure to provide programming that will have the greatest impact.

- Organization intends to foster innovation and risk-taking by developing its bandwidth to take advantage of suitable opportunities as they arise.

# Organizational Grant Eligibility Requirements

**Eligible organizations meet the following requirements:**

- **Mission and purpose:** Arts and culture mission-driven nonprofit organization. The organization's primary purpose must be the creation, presentation, or utilization of arts and culture.

- **Local focus:** Arts and cultural activities of the applicant organization must occur in St. Louis City and/or St. Louis County.

- **Nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization:** In "good standing" as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Missouri and 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or a unit of federal or local government such as a library, county, or municipal agency.

- **Arts programming:** The proposed program's primary purpose must be the creation, presentation, or utilization of arts and culture; programming must be publicly accessible.

- **Timeframe:** The activities and/or operations for which the applicant is applying must take place between July 1, 2025, and June 31, 2026.

# How much can my organization apply for?

Organizations with annual operating budget of $2,000,001 and up may apply for up to $100,000.

Organizations with annual operating budget up to $2,000,000 may apply for up to $50,000.

Organizations with annual operating budget up to $500,000 may apply for up to $25,000.

# Timeline

Opera Theatre of St. Louis

## Application Dates through Appeals Process

| | |
|---|---|
| **Application Available** | **Tuesday, January 21** |
| **Pre-application Deadline** | **Tuesday, January 28** |
| **Grants Team Office Hours** | **Tuesday, February 11, 3pm–5pm** |
| **VLAA Financial Statements Clinic** | **Tuesday, February 11, 3pm–5pm** |
| **Grants Team Office Hours** | **Tuesday, February 18, 3pm–5pm** |
| **VLAA Financial Statements Clinic** | **Tuesday, February 18, 3pm–5pm** |
| **Pre-application Feedback Returned to Orgs** | **Monday, February 24** |
| **Grants Team Office Hours** | **Tuesday, February 25, 3pm–5pm** |
| **VLAA Financial Statements Clinic** | **Tuesday, February 25, 3pm–5pm** |
| **Application Deadline** | **Monday, March 3** |
| **Eligibility Review (Internal)** | **Tuesday, March 4 – Friday, March 28** |
| **Financial Review** | **Monday, March 10 – Monday, March 31** |
| **Reviewers Receive Applications** | **Week of March 31** |
| **Reviewer Ratings Due** | **Friday, April 25** |
| **Staff Rating Analysis** | **Monday, April 28 – Friday, May 9** |
| **Organizational Panel Meetings (as necessary)** | **Week of May 12** |
| **Staff Finalizes Organizational Ratings** | **Monday, May 19** |
| **Org Application Ratings Shared with Applicants / Appeal Form Available** | **Week of May 19** |
| **Organizational Applicant Appeal Deadline** | **Thursday, May 29** |

## Grant Management Dates through Final Reporting

| | |
|---|---|
| **Commission Votes on Awards** | **Thursday, June 12 (Commission Meeting)** |
| **Award Announcements & Notifications** | **After June 12** |
| **Organizational Applicant Appeal Meetings** | **Tuesday, July 8 – Monday, July 14** |
| **Appeal Decision Notification** | **Monday, July 15 – Wednesday, July 31** |
| **Grant Agreement Distributed and Signed** | **July 2025** |
| **Grant Payment** | **July 2025** |
| **Final Report Available** | **September 2025** |
| **Grant Period** | **July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026** |
| **Final Grant Report Due** | **Friday, August 14, 2026** |

# Accessing the Application: The New Portal

# How to Access the Application: The New Portal

*You must sign in using a Blackbaud ID. You may create a new Blackbaud ID account or login with an existing Blackbaud ID, if you already use a Blackbaud product, such as Raiser's Edge.*
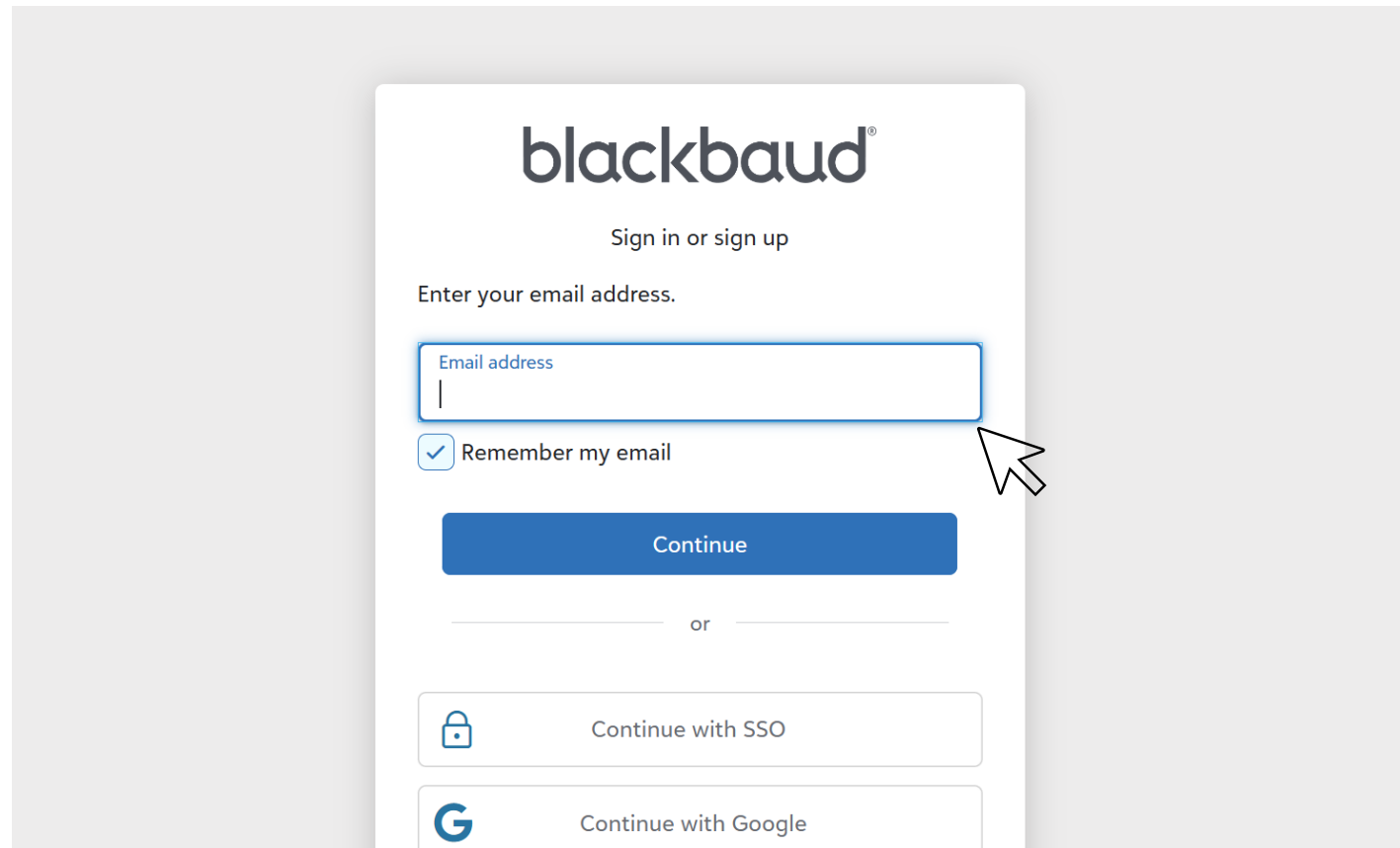
*If you do not have a Blackbaud ID, you may create one from the grant application page (unique URL found on the RAC website) or from the login page of the new Grants Portal (https://bbgmapply.yourcausegrants.com/apply/applications).*

*Each grant application in the new Grants Portal will have a unique URL. For more information about grant opportunities at RAC and to access the current links for open grant applications, please visit the Grants page of the RAC website: http://www.racstl.org/grants.*

*To access an application that you have already started, log into the Grants Portal here: https://bbgmapply.yourcausegrants.com/apply/applications.*

**Who should I contact if I can't access my account in either the new Grants Portal or the Legacy (old) Portal?**
*For technical assistance with the Blackbaud Grantmaking system, please email Blackbaud Technical Support at MS_RACSTL_Grantmaking@blackbaud.com.*

# How to Access the Application

Start a new application.

# How to Access the Application

Select your organization.

# How to Access the Application



**ELIGIBILITY FORM QUESTIONS**

Complete the required fields below.
Accepting applications until Mar 3, 2025 11:59 PM

**Organizational Grant – Eligibility Quiz**

The Organizational Grant category provides a one-year, unrestricted, and flexible grant to support the day-to-day operations or programs of nonprofit arts and culture mission-driven organizations that produce and present arts and culture programming in St. Louis city and county.

Fiscally-sponsored programs and non-arts organizations that produce arts programming (including arts programs produced by St. Louis universities) should visit the Program Support Grant application.

Please email grants@racstl.org with any questions about the organization's eligibility for a RAC Organizational Grant.

Is the organization's primary purpose the creation, presentation or utilization of arts and culture?*

Do the organization's arts and cultural activities take place in St. Louis City and/or St. Louis County?*

Answer the questions in the eligibility quiz to access the application.

# More questions about the portal?

Visit [https://racstl.org/grants-portal/](https://racstl.org/grants-portal/) to read frequently asked questions about the new portal.

Please know the best way to seek technical assistance or account management assistance within the portal is the Blackbaud Technical Team.

*For technical assistance with the Blackbaud Grantmaking system, please email Blackbaud Technical Support at [MS_RACSTL_Grantmaking@blackbaud.com](mailto:MS_RACSTL_Grantmaking@blackbaud.com).*

# Application Overview



RESILIENCE Dance Company

# How are Grants Rated?

Each application will be scored by grant reviewers according to RAC's review criteria (Artistic Essentials; Community Benefit; and Capacity/Sustainability) and the rating system, available in the RAC ORG guidelines.

There are three review sections that correspond to RAC review criteria: Each review section has three questions, for a total of nine questions in the application.

Each review section is weighted and conveys the corresponding points possible for each question. Application question responses can be rated exemplary, strong, good, fair, or weak – and given a score within the provided point range.

The maximum number of points available is 100.

# Review Criteria

**Cultural and/or Artistic Essentials**  *(40% weighting)*

An organization that produces or presents culturally and artistically significant work that supports a full creative life for every St. Louisan.

**Community Benefit** *(30% weighting)*

An organization that demonstrates broad community benefit and contributes to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the community.

**Capacity & Sustainability** *(30% weighting)*

An organization that intentionally plans for program capacity & sustainability.

# Application Sections

**Organization and Key Contact Information**

**Request Information**

**Cultural & Artistic Essentials (3 questions)**

**Community Benefit (3 questions)**

**Capacity & Sustainability (3 questions)**

**Supporting Documents**

- Work Samples
- DEIA Statement, Policy or Plan (optional)
- Organizational Budget Template
- Most recent Form 990 submitted to IRS
- Board of Directors List
- Financial Statements for the two most recently completed fiscal years and most recent audit (if available).
- Staff List
- Organizational Health Worksheet
- Critical Review (optional)
- Strategic Plan (optional)

# Application Questions

# Cultural and/or Artistic Essentials

## QUESTION 1

**Essentials** (300 word maximum): Provide an overview of the organization and program(s).

- Describes the organization, the programmatic activities, and the resources necessary for operations and programs, and the impact.
- Conveys all aspects of the organization, including clear plans for program execution (i.e.: location, dates, frequency, etc. -- who, what, when, where, and why).

# Cultural and/or Artistic Essentials

## QUESTION 2

**Cultural and Artistic Significance (300 word maximum):** Explain the organization's programs and artistic intention, including an accounting of who the artists/creatives involved in implementing your program/s are.

- Demonstrates cultural and artistic significance and how the activities are relevant to the arts & culture sector and artists and is supported in the marketplace.
- Indicates clear commitment to recruit, engage, and compensate artists – with an emphasis on St. Louis artists.
- Programmatic activities embody excellence of artistic craft & skills.
- Programmatic activities contribute to innovation and new thinking in the artform and wider culture.
- Indicates organization's plans for artistic growth or expanding artistic aspirations and/or artistic risk.
- Work samples indicate alignment with organizational/ programmatic activities.

# Cultural and/or Artistic Essentials

## QUESTION 3

**Organization Goals: What does success look like?**
(300 word maximum)
**Identify and explain the organization's:**

- **Goals**
- **Objectives**
- **Outcomes**

- Goals, objectives, and outcomes are realistic and relative to organizational/ programmatic activities and planned execution.
- Goals, objectives, and outcomes are outlined using the SMART Framework – Specific / Measurable / Achievable / Relevant / Time-Bound.
- Assessment/evaluation efforts align with the outcomes; and systems are in place to track the results/impact of the organization's work.

**Community Benefit**

**QUESTION 4**

**Audience**: Provide an overview of your organization's intended audience. (300 word maximum)

- Attendance, participation, or other measures indicate that the audience or a constituency values the organization's programs.
- Conveys organization's impact through qualitative and quantitative data (examples include number of locations, zip codes, neighborhoods, and/or participants served).
- Demonstrates a link between artistic intention and audience experience.
- Some level of audience assessment is indicated.

# Community Benefit

# QUESTION 5

**DEIA** (300 word maximum): Describe your organization's efforts to attract and/or retain diverse audiences and increase access to the arts for underrepresented individuals and/or under-resourced neighborhoods. Provide two specific action steps your organization has taken in the past twelve months that demonstrate your commitment to creating an inclusive environment and/or recruiting diverse collaborators and/or providing equitable opportunities to create and participate and/or provide intentionally accessible programs.

**If your organization has a board approved DEIA statement, policy, or plan, please upload a PDF of it below. If you don't have one, please indicate your organization's intentions of developing such a document or documents.**

- Intentionally and strategically recruits diverse collaborators (volunteers, staff, board, donors, participants, etc.) and creatives.
- Develops meaningful collaborations with diverse neighborhoods and communities to provide equitable opportunities for creation and participation.
- Offerings and information about locations where programs are provided are intentionally accessible to all people and available to the public.
- Organization is making progress in reaching new audiences/community or is strengthening relationships with the existing audience.
- Demonstrates consideration of affordability in offerings (free and/or reduced-price admission, scholarship, etc).
- Organization's leadership and its culture is for an inclusive environment.
- If organization has uploaded a board-approved DEIA statement, policy, or plan, it informs programmatic activities.

# Community Benefit

## QUESTION 6

**Community Engagement** (300 word maximum): How is the work connected to the community, location, or context, including official or unofficial partners, explaining how those partnerships inform or support your work.

- Indicates the organization contributes to the vibrancy, diversity, safety, and economic vitality of neighborhoods, communities, or the broader St. Louis region.
- Demonstrates healthy and/or consistent level of participation/community connection.
- Educational, interpretive, and/or other public activities broaden public involvement.
- Evidence of the degree to which the organization is grounded in the community by media acknowledgement, partnerships and alliances, and relationships with broad cross-section of the community.

# Capacity and Sustainability

## QUESTION 7

Supporting Upload: Budget Template

**Budget & Budget Narrative** (300 word maximum): Upload your operational budget and provide a budget narrative describing the organization's ability to carry out its annual goals based on factors such as people and financial resources.

- Has a reasonable budget and clearly articulated budget narrative that explains a deficit or surplus.
- Budget identifies other existing or potential and reasonable revenue streams.
- Contingency plan in place to support operations and/or programmatic activities.

# Capacity and Sustainability

# QUESTION 8

Supporting Upload: Organizational Health Worksheet.

<u>Organizational Health</u>: Upload the provided organizational health worksheet.

- Conveys ability to maintain successful and efficiently executed operations and programs throughout the funding period, while advancing the organization's mission and maintaining public trust.
- Indicates an active and engaged Board of Directors.

# Capacity and Sustainability

# QUESTION 9

## Sustainability (500 word maximum): Please provide a growth and development statement.

- Statement complements what is known about the organization and the information provided in the budget.
- Planning and development, including goal setting, marketing, budgeting, and evaluation are appropriate to scope of operations.
- Evidence of dynamic adaptability—the capacity of the organization for self-awareness combined with an ability to plan its business and communications to the public, prioritize and implement its plans, track performance against its plan, and make appropriate corrections as circumstances change.
- Demonstrates the capacity of the current board and staff to guide the organization to achieve its strategic goals.
- Organization demonstrates sufficient human, financial, and organizational capacity to respond to changing environmental conditions.

# Financial Review Process

**<u>Financial Review Panel for Organizations with Budgets of $500,000 or More</u>**

A Financial Review Panel will review budgets, financial documents, and the organizational health worksheet for added due diligence during the application process.

The Panel will not score applications but provide comments regarding the financial stability of the organization to help inform the Application Reviewers in the scoring of applications. Financial Review Panel members include RAC commissioners and individuals with nonprofit finance expertise.

Based on Financial Review Panel comments and Reviewer comments/scores, RAC staff may move an application score down one to three points based on financial or operational risk.

**<u>Financial Review for Organizations with Budgets of Less Than $500,000</u>**

For organizational applicants with an annual budget of less than $500,000, RAC staff may move an application score down one to three points based on financial risk. Red flags include missing required financial documents, the lack of contingency plan or lack of diverse revenue streams, and other factors based on reviewer comments.

# RAC Staff Scoring:

RAC staff will have the option to move an application score down one to four points based on financial or reputational risk.

To mitigate reputational risk for the applicant/grantee and for RAC, RAC staff may elect to move an applicant score down one point based on responses to the Organizational Health Worksheet. Reputational risk stems from events that cause an organization an embarrassment or threat to its brand, programming, or operations.

Additionally, there may be Commission-approved recommendations or stipulations that are part of a grantee's contract, based on reviewer comments.

The points assigned to each question in the application are used to determine final award amount. Points are combined to provide an overall application score. All scores for an application are then averaged for the final application score.

# Creating Your Narratives

# How to Put Together an Effective Narrative

The narrative component of your application defines your project's scope and purpose, and it explains how it will be executed.

Effective narratives are

- Succinct
- Organized
- Written in clear, direct language

Stages St. Louis

# What's in a Narrative?

An application narrative is the core of your application.

It typically covers:

❖ Purpose
❖ Significance or impact (why it is important)
❖ Program Description
❖ Timeline
❖ Projected Outcomes
❖ Budget / Budget Narrative

# Prepare to Write

Think through all the details of your request

Clear details of items like:

- Specific audience
- Location(s) where your project will take place
- Potential challenges you may face

Begin by copying and pasting the application questions into a word document to ensure you don't lose anything you've created in the application portal.

# This will be your first draft!

Write fast and furiously, getting the details down.

No need to worry about word count at this point.

Use the wording from the application question and the review criteria.

Once you respond to all 9 of the application questions

- Go over what you've written: Are you happy with it?
- Do a word count
- Revise, edit, etc.

Landmarks Association of St. Louis

# In your next draft…

**Make sure you've responded to the question and the review criteria**

**Cut out "the fat"**

**Don't go overboard on abbreviations**

**Write for a general audience**

**Check to see that you've addressed WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY**

❖ Who is implementing the project?

❖ What activities does the project consist of?

❖ When will the project take place?  What are milestones in the project timeline?

❖ Where will the project take place?

❖ Why is the project relevant? Why are you the right person to do the project?

**Consider how you will assess your organization's success**

**Performance Measures Define the Success of the Project / Program / Need**

Ø     **Goals**

Ø     **Objectives**

Ø     **Outcomes**

**GOALS**

**A goal is:**

- Ø   **A broad statement**
- Ø   **A summary of the "big picture"**
- Ø   **Future-focused, perhaps long-term**
- Ø   **Intangible, difficult to measure**

**OBJECTIVES (SMART—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely)**

**An objective is:**

Ø    **A narrow statement**

Ø    **A precise description of end products**

Ø    **Clear and concrete**

Ø    **Tangible and measurable**

**OUTCOMES**

**An outcome is:**

- ➢ **A statement of humanistic benefit, change, or effect**
- ➢ **Measurable**
- ➢ **A valuable tool for answering the "So what?" question**
- ➢ **A way to highlight long-term impact and value**

Stray Dog Theatre

# Review!

Are you happy with your narrative?

Find a trusted colleague or friend to read what you've written

- ➤ Ask the reader what questions they may have about your project after reading what you've written. It may help you clarify what you need in your narrative.
- ➤ Incorporate revisions
- ➤ Spellcheck!

# You are ready to submit!

Ensure all elements of your application help tell the same story—from narrative sections through document uploads and budget.

**Aim to submit at least one day prior to the deadline.**

RAC will not accept any late submissions.

FAQs

### I CANNOT ACCESS MY ACCOUNT. WHO DO I CONTACT?

Blackbaud Grantmaking is the RAC grant management system. For technical assistance when using the grantmaking system, please email MS_RACSTL_Grantmaking@blackbaud.com.

### HOW WILL I COMMUNICATE WITH RAC REGARDING MY APPLICATION?

Add noreply@yourcause.com AND mail@grantapplication.com AND grants@racstl.org to your address book or safe senders list to ensure you receive all communications from RAC.

### IS THERE A PRE-APPLICATION REQUIREMENT?

Organizational Grant applicants are not required to submit a pre-application. However, submitting a pre-application is an opportunity to receive RAC staff feedback on your application and to make changes before the final submission. To have your application reviewed by RAC staff before the final deadline, please submit a pre-application via the grantmaking system between January 21 and January 28, 2025. Feedback from RAC staff on the pre-applications will be provided by February 24, 2025. The final application deadline is March 3, 2025.

### ARE MATCHING FUNDS REQUIRED?

**Organizational Grant awards do not require matching funds.** However, RAC encourages organizations to identify and secure diverse revenue streams.

How many Organizational Grants will be made in 2025?
The available annual funding for RAC Organizational Grants is not sufficient to meet applicant demand. The amount of grants made depends on available funding, the number of applications submitted, the applicant score, and the number of applicants awarded.

How many applications are typically submitted each year?
In 2024, RAC received 151 applications. 144 of those applications were eligible for funding. 95 organizational grants were made.

Can schools and universities apply for Organizational Support?
No, they can only apply for Program Support.

What if I don't have a DEIA Statement, Policy, or Plan?
A DEIA statement, policy or plan is not required.

When will we be notified whether or not an application has been approved?

Grant Award Announcements and Notifications are set for after June 12, 2025.

Organizational grant applicants will receive their application score the week of May 19, 2025 in order to file an appeal. Appeals must be filed by 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 29, 2025.

Can Organizational applicants appeal a rating?

Yes, an applicant has the right to appeal after either of the following:

- The applicant receives final ratings and reviewer comments supplied through the online grantmaking portal.
- The applicant receives final ratings and reviewer comments in a recording of the virtual review meeting.

After applicants receive the final ratings, they have the right to appeal if:

- They believe a factual error was made during the review that negatively affected their rating.
- They believe their application's review was based on criteria or application requirements different from those published in the RAC guidelines that negatively affected their rating.

Can costs incurred before July 1, 2025 be eligible for funding?

Costs incurred before the timeline (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) should not be included in the organizational budget or a part of the request.

**Is it possible to add or delete lines and categories in the budget template?**
Yes. The template is provided in Excel. If you have MS Excel, you can add and delete lines and categories as needed.

If you do not have Excel, you can open the spreadsheet in Google Sheets by saving the template in your Google Drive. Then double-click on the Excel file and click "Open with Google Sheets" in the preview that appears.

To open the template in Apple Numbers, save the template on your desktop or in your downloads folder. Then double-click on the Excel file and it will automatically open in Numbers, if you don't have the MS Excel application.

If you recreate the template keep the formatting as similar as possible. This will also have to be uploaded as a PDF.

# Contact Information

For any technical questions please email MS_RACSTL_Grantmaking@blackbaud.com.

## WHO TO CONTACT WITH PROCESS QUESTIONS

Chloe Smith
Grants & Programs Manager
chloe@racstl.org

Ann Haubrich
Grants & Programs Senior Manager
ann@racstl.org

**Thank You!**

Q+A!