PROGRAM SUPPORT GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

REGIONAL ARTS COMMISSION OF ST. LOUIS

2022

WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR?

Grants Management System (GMS)
In 2022 and moving forward, RAC is implementing a Blackbaud product as our grantee platform. Our previous grantmaking system was retired by the provider in 2020.

GMS Technical Assistance
For technical assistance questions when using the grantmaking system, please email MS_RACSTL_Grantmaking@blackbaud.com.

Updated Program Support Schedule
The grant application period will begin with the application available in February 2022, and grants announced in late May 2022.

Eligibility Quiz
RAC will not require a pre-qualification process. In the new process, each organization planning to apply will complete a short eligibility quiz that is part of the application. Should the quiz responses deem an organization ineligible, the application will not be available.

10-Point Rating System
This year RAC will implement a 10-point rating system. This system will not be too different from the previous nine-point system (4, 4-,3+, 3, 3-, 2+, 2, 2-, 1), but will use numbers 1 through 10. The maximum eligible funding level, 100%, will be represented by receiving a 10.

Removal Of Matching Funds
RAC will not require matching funds for program support grantees in 2022.

Please note: Although RAC will not require matching funds for Program Support grantees in 2022, RAC encourages diverse revenue streams for Program Support.

Removal Of Grant Tier Requirements
In previous years, applicants applied to a tier that totaled half the costs of their project expenses (i.e. an organization with project expenses of $30,000 or more could apply for a $15,000 grant).

Please note: This year organizations are encouraged to apply at the funding tier that reflects the amount needed for their program but not total project expenses.

Updated Review Process
Grant reviewers will independently read and rate all applications within the GMS portal. Staff will review the ratings and determine the applications with the greatest score variance; these will be the only applications discussed during the review meeting. **Not all applications will be reviewed during the virtual meeting.** This year the application review process will take place during a 90-minute virtual meeting rather than a panel meeting. During the meeting, reviewers will provide a second rating to those applications. All application ratings will be averaged, ranked highest to lowest, and then presented to the reviewers for a final review.

All virtual meetings will be recorded and published on the website so that applicants may listen to their application's review. Applications not discussed in the virtual review meetings will receive access to the reviewers comments.

Appeal Process

If an applicant appeals the review panel decision, a second virtual meeting will occur. At the appeals meeting, RAC staff will present the appeal as submitted by the organization to the reviewers who rated the application. The appeal meeting will not be open to applicants. Results of the appeals meeting will be shared with the applicant the week following the meeting.

Disbursement Process

Each Program Support Grant recipient will receive a single direct deposit for the whole award amount by July 1, 2022.

Reporting Process

In 2022, should a grantee not complete the final reporting requirement they will be ineligible to apply for RAC grants in the future. Additionally, any funds not expended for the purposes of the grant as applied for must be returned to RAC. Documentation will be required.

GMS Grant Stages

With the new grantmaking system, RAC will follow new grant stages embedded in the system. The stages of the grant process are (1) request; (2) decision-making; (3) grant management; and (4) analysis. These stages are explained in the grant guidelines that begin on the following page.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

2022 GRANT GUIDELINES
APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, March 21, 2022
GRANT ACTIVITY PERIOD: July 1, 2022- June 31, 2023

I. REQUEST

BACKGROUND

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/or presentation of 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 funding history within this category before gaining eligibility to apply for General Operating Support.

APPLICATION CATEGORIES

Arts and Culture Programs
Performances, concerts, exhibitions, readings, publications, arts education, and 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, i.e., as a destination for out-of-town visitors

Community Arts Programs
Programs using the arts as a tool for social change and/or civic engagement

In Program Support:
- 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 execution.
- Projects may be new and untested or ongoing with proven track records.
- Projects may cover a broad range of singular or multiple artistic disciplines.

ELIGIBILITY FOR PROGRAM SUPPORT

Eligible organizations meet the following requirements:
- **Local focus:** Arts programs and projects must occur in St. Louis City and/or St. Louis County.

- **Nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization:** 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.
- **Arts programming:** The proposed program's primary purpose must be the creation, presentation, or utilization of art.
- **First-time applicants:** 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.
- **Timeframe:** The program for which you are applying must take place between July 1, 2022, and June 31, 2023.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP
Arts organizations at the $5,000 and $3,000 grant tiers are eligible to apply with a fiscal sponsor (agent) in Program Support, 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), preferably with a history of arts programming, or has tax-exempt status from the IRS with a fiscal sponsorship-based mission.
- Included in the application is a letter signed by the sponsoring organization executive director indicating their agreement to serve as a fiscal sponsor should a grant be made for the program.
- If an application is funded, RAC requires the applicant and the fiscal sponsor both sign the Terms and Conditions Agreement.

RESTRICTIONS – WE DO NOT FUND
Click here to review the list of programs, projects, or events that RAC does not fund.

GRANT REVIEW CRITERIA
Program Support applicants will respond to the following review criteria:
Artistic Merit and Quality of Programs
- Demonstrates artistic significance and the project is relevant to the artistic field, artists, and audience.
  - A consistent audience base evidenced by attendance numbers, community support, and ticket sales (as applicable).
- Application indicates clear commitment to recruit, engage, and compensate artists with an emphasis on local artists.
- Clear and ongoing commitment to program planning and development, including goal setting, marketing, budgeting, and evaluation.

Community Benefit
- Demonstrated commitment to community engagement, and the application 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, diversity, safety, and economic vitality of neighborhoods, communities, or the entire St. Louis region.

Organizational Capacity
- Quality and clarity of the project goals and design and the resources involved.
- An engaged and diverse board of directors who contribute 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.
- Effective management of past RAC grant(s). Please note: RAC staff will have access to this information and will make the information available during the review meeting, as needed.

GRANT RATING SCALE

Rating Scale	Score Meaning
10	Outstanding
9	Excellent
8	Excellent
7	Good
6	Good
5	Fair
4	Fair
3	Not Competitive
2	Not Competitive
1	Not Competitive

GRANT TIERS/AWARD AMOUNTS

Eligible organizations can apply for funding in four discrete grant tiers. The maximum amount of funding an organization can receive from each of these tiers is $15,000, $10,000, $5,000, or $3,000.

MATCHING FUNDS & GRANT TIERS

Program Support grant awards will not require matching funds in 2022, although RAC encourages diverse revenue streams for program support.

Organizations seeking Program Support grants are encouraged to apply at the funding tier that reflects the amount of funding needed for their program.

$15,000				$10,000		
Application Rating	% Eligible	Grant Award		Application Rating	% Eligible	Grant Award
10	100%	$15,000		10	100%	$10,000
9 - 9.9	90%	$13,500		9 - 9.9	90%	$9,000
8 – 8.9	80%	$12,000		8 – 8.9	80%	$8,000
7 – 7.9	70%	$10,500		7 – 7.9	70%	$7,000
6 – 6.9	60%	$9,000		6 – 6.9	60%	$6,000
5 – 5.9	50%	$7,500		5 – 5.9	50%	$5,000
4 – 4.9	40%	$6,000		4 – 4.9	40%	$4,000
3 – 3.9	Not Eligible			3 – 3.9	Not Eligible	
2 – 2.9	Not Eligible			2 – 2.9	Not Eligible	
1 – 1.9	Not Eligible			1 – 1.9	Not Eligible	

$5,000		
Application Rating	% Eligible	Grant Award
10	100%	$5,000
9 - 9.9	90%	$4,500
8 – 8.9	80%	$4,000
7 – 7.9	70%	$3,500
6 – 6.9	60%	$3,000
5 – 5.9	50%	$2,500
4 – 4.9	40%	$2,000
3 – 3.9	Not Eligible	
2 – 2.9	Not Eligible	
1 – 1.9	Not Eligible	

$3,000		
Application Rating	% Eligible	Grant Award
10	100%	$3,000
9 - 9.9	90%	$2,700
8 – 8.9	80%	$2,400
7 – 7.9	70%	$2,100
6 – 6.9	60%	$1,800
5 – 5.9	50%	$1,500
4 – 4.9	40%	$1,200
3 – 3.9	Not Eligible	
2 – 2.9	Not Eligible	
1 – 1.9	Not Eligible	

II.   DECISION-MAKING

REVIEW PROCESS
Grant reviewers play a central role in RAC's annual grantmaking process. Reviewers commit to the following:
- Attend/view an online 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.
- Attend a virtual review meeting with other panelists to discuss and rate applications with the greatest variance in scoring from the first round of reviews.
- Hear appeals, if necessary, and render a final rating.
- Provide feedback on the application review process for improvement purposes.

Note: Grant reviewers will independently read and rate all applications within the GMS portal. Staff will review the ratings and determine the applications with the greatest score variance; these will be the only applications discussed during the review meeting. **Not all applications will be reviewed during the virtual meeting.**

Review panelists are offered a modest honorarium of $200 as a demonstration of RAC's acknowledgement of and appreciation for the time and effort invested in this work.

RATING SYSTEM
Each application will be rated according to RAC's review criteria. RAC uses a ten-point rating system: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. Please see page 6.

An applicant's rating is used to determine funding. Applicants who receive a rating of 10 are considered model – meeting all review criteria in an exemplary fashion; a rating of 10 is rare. Applicants who receive a rating of 6 are considered good, but some development is necessary. Applicants who receive a rating of 4 are considered in need of significant improvement in multiple areas, and depending upon the availability of funds, may not receive funding. **Organizations who receive a rating of 3 or below do not meet RAC criteria and will not be recommended for funding.**

Most applications will receive an average that is not a whole number. For example, if an application is reviewed by seven reviewers and receives the following ratings: 8, 7, 7, 5, 7, 6, and 7, the application's average would be a 6.7. This means the application is eligible to receive 60% of the funding applied for. The percent of eligibility is determined by the whole number and not rounded up or down.

RATING TRANSPARENCY

This year the application review process will take place during a 90-minute virtual meeting rather than a panel meeting.

Once the application closes on the deadline date of March 21, grant reviewers will read and rate all applications within the GMS portal. Staff will then review the ratings to determine the applications with the greatest score variance. Applications with the greatest score variance will be discussed during the review meeting.

Reviewers will provide a second rating to those applications. All application ratings will be averaged, ranked highest to lowest, and then presented to the reviewers for a final review. Not all applications will be reviewed during the virtual meeting--only those with a large variance in ratings.

All virtual meetings will be recorded and published on the website so that applicants may listen to their application's review.

APPEALS PROCESS

In addition to reading applications, reviewers will participate in an appeals process, if necessary.

An applicant has the right to appeal after either of the following:
- The organization receives final ratings and reviewer comments supplied through the GMS.
- The organization receives final ratings and reviewer comments in a recording of the virtual review meeting.

After applicants receive their organization's final ratings, they have the right to appeal if:
- They believe a factual error was made during the review that adversely affected their rating.
- They believe their application's review was based on criteria or application requirements other than those published in the RAC guidelines that adversely affected their rating.

To be considered, applicants must have solid grounds for an appeal. Dissatisfaction with a rating or denial of an award is not sufficient grounds for an appeal. Solid grounds for an appeal are based on a misstatement of fact made during the review meeting that can be evidenced by written information found in the application; or if the applicant can demonstrate that the review of the application was based on criteria or application requirements other than those appearing in the RAC guidelines. New information not originally included in the application cannot be offered as evidence of the misstatement.

Upon reading reviewer's comments or listening to the recording of the application's review, if an applicant finds a misstatement of fact was made; or if the applicant can demonstrate the application's review was based on criteria or application requirements other than those appearing in the RAC

guidelines, an appeal form may be filed with RAC staff. Staff will review and approve all requests for appeals before convening reviewers for consideration. Appeals will not move forward without staff approval. However, staff approval does not guarantee that the appeal will be approved by the review panel or that the original rating will change.

Should RAC approve the filed appeal, in a second virtual meeting, RAC staff will present the appeal as submitted by the organization to the reviewers who rated the application. The appeal calls will not be open to applicants. Using Robert's Rules of Order, the panelists may vote in favor (majority rules) of approving an increase to the final rating. The results of the appeals call will be shared with the applicant the following week.

Should RAC approve the filed appeal, in a second virtual meeting, RAC staff will present the appeal as submitted by the organization to the reviewers who rated the application. The appeal calls will not be open to applicants. Using Robert's Rules of Order, the panelists may vote in favor (majority rules) of approving an increase to the final rating. The results of the appeals call will be shared with the applicant the following week.

NOTIFICATION
If awarded a grant, applicants will be notified both in the GMS portal and via email.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS ACCEPTANCE
Once awarded, grantees will sign a terms and conditions agreement before receiving the grant award in full via direct deposit. Direct deposit must be set up prior to the payment date. Grantees will have access to instructions on how to do this through the GMS portal or in email communications.

III. GRANT MANAGEMENT

PAYMENT PROCESSING
Each Program Support Grant recipient will be asked to sign an agreement before collecting the payment. Grant awards are disbursed in a single payment through automatic deposit to the grantee's designated bank account through the Bill.com platform. After signing the agreement, grantees will receive a Bill.com email prompting them to create an account. There are instructions on the RAC website that will help guide grantees through this process. Once the account is created with the proper banking information, RAC will process the award payment.

The Program Support payment will be received in one disbursement equaling the total award amount.

IV. ANALYSIS

REPORTING
If an application is approved for funding, following the end date of the project each grantee will submit required documentation as a part of the final report to confirm the funds were used as intended. Should a grantee not complete the reporting requirement, they will be ineligible to apply for RAC grants in the future.

Program Support Application Required Documents Checklist
- Fiscal Sponsorship Letter (as necessary, see page 5)
- Board of Directors List
- Budget Template (RAC website)
- Previous Fiscal Year Financial Statement/Audit (example on RAC website)
- Up to 3 Work Samples
- Critical Review (optional)

PROGRAM SUPPORT GRANT SCHEDULE 2022-2023

Applications Available	Monday, February 28
Application Writing Workshop*	Wednesday, March 2
Application Deadline	Monday, March 21
Reviewers Receive Applications	Week of Monday March 28
Reviewer Ratings Due	Friday, April 15
Virtual Review Meetings	Monday, April 25 - Friday, May 6
Appeals Due	Friday, May 13
Virtual Appeal Meetings	Monday, May 16 - Friday, May 20
Commission Vote on Awards	Mid-May
Award Announcements	By May 31
Contracts Signed	June 17
Payment/Final Report Available	July 1
Grant Programming Begins	July 1 - June 31, 2023
Final Report Deadline	August 15, 2023

*The workshop will be virtual and the recording available on the RAC website

WHO TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS

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