



**REGIONAL ARTS
COMMISSION**
OF ST. LOUIS

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**Regional Arts Commission
Grants & Programs Committee Minutes
July 7, 2026 @ 3:30 p.m. via Zoom**

Call to Order & Committee Members in Attendance

Chair Fiorello called the July 7, 2026, Grants & Programs Committee meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. and asked Sutherlin to conduct the Committee roll call.

Committee Members in Attendance

Sam Fiorello, chair, Rhonda Carter-Adams, Gerad Ewing, Rudy Nickens *Matt Coble (*Non-Voting Committee Member)

Yea – Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Ewing, Nickens (Coble acknowledged)

Nay – none

Abstain – none

Committee Members Absent

Tino Ochoa, ex-officio

Others in Attendance

Andréa Purnell

Staff Attendees

Vanessa Cooksey, Savannah Babington, Charlie Bosco, Ann Haubrich, Chloe Higgins, Leigh Winter, Lea Sutherlin

Approval of Minutes

Chair Fiorello called for a motion to approve the May 22, 2026 Grants & Programs Committee minutes.

Motion made by Nickens, seconded by Carter-Adams and unanimously carried to approve the May 22, 2026 Grants & Programs Committee minutes. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Ewing, Nickens (Coble acknowledged)

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Discretionary Grants

Haubrich shared a recap of the 2026 Annual Board + Staff retreat discussions and presented team recommendations on the discretionary grants, partners, public art and opportunity grants.

Committee members discussions held on the following: (1) discussed replacing the discretionary grant model with clearer categories, eligibility criteria, guidelines, and stronger oversight; (2) proposed funding areas included arts service agreements, public art partnerships, and a smaller opportunity/emergency grant pool with restrictions and a defined review process; and (3) agreed that two options would be presented to the full Commission at its July 2026 meeting: [a] eliminating the fund entirely or [b] adopting the revised structure.





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Fiorello called for a motion to approve the Discretionary Grants.

Motion made by Nickens, seconded by Carter-Adams and unanimously approved to present the two Discretionary Grant options to the full Commission at its July 2026 meeting. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Ewing, Nickens (Coble acknowledged)

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Artist Support Grants 2027-2030

Haubrich asked Bosco to share team recommendations regarding Artist Support Grants 2027-2030.

Bosco shared the following: (1) the proposal would move from one artist support category to two categories: Artist Investment Grants and Artist Project Grants; (2) Artist Investment Grants would support high-impact mid-career to established artists with awards up to \$25,000; (3) Artist Project Grants would support project-based work for emerging and mid-career artists and collectives.

Committee members discussion held on grantee view of current application process, application accessibility, public benefit, and post-award accountability.

Fiorello called for a motion to approve the Artist Support Grants 2027-2030.

Motion made by Nickens, seconded by Ewing and unanimously carried to approve the Artist Support Grants 2027-2030. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Ewing, Nickens (Coble acknowledged)

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Program Support Grants 2027–2030

Haubrich asked Winter to share team recommendations regarding Program Support Grants 2027-2030.

Winter shared the following: (1) the grants team recommended continuing Program Support Grants largely unchanged, serving non-arts organizations that present arts programming across St. Louis City and County; and (2) the proposed annual funding level was \$500,000, supporting approximately 50 grants per year.

Committee members discussion held to clarify examples, including neighborhood arts fairs, cultural festivals, fiscally sponsored projects, and programs that hire individual artists.

Motion made by Carter-Adams, seconded by Ewing and unanimously carried to approve the Program Support Grants 2027-2030. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Ewing, Nickens (Coble acknowledged)

Nay – none

Abstain - none





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Arts Organization Grants 2027-2030

Haubrich shared team recommendations regarding Arts Organization and Pillar Grants 2027-2030 as follows: (1) the proposal reorganized organizational grantmaking into tiers based on three-year expense averages and introduced pillar grants for the largest arts and culture organizations.

Committee members discussion held regarding grant amounts, city/county representation, reporting expectations, revised criteria, youth education expectations, partnerships with non-anchor organizations, considerations for additional grants based on RAC revenue growth in 2028, and accountability capacity.

Motion made by Nickens, seconded by Ewing and unanimously carried to approve the grant modifications for Arts Organization Grants 2027-2030. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Ewing, Nickens (Coble acknowledged)

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Haubrich shared the following next steps: (1) present the recommendations to the full Commission at the July 16 meeting; (2) prepare website updates and public-facing grant information; (3) hold a July 29 town hall to communicate the 2027 grantmaking plan to grantees; and (4) create infographic-style visuals showing what is staying the same and what is changing across grant categories.

Committee members thanked the team for their “amazing work.”

Roll Call & Adjournment

Chair Fiorello called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Carter-Adams seconded by Nickens, and unanimously approved to adjourn the July 7, 2026 Grants & Programs Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Fiorello (proxy), Carter-Adams, Ochoa (Coble, acknowledged)

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Submitted by,
L. Sutherlin, Exec. Asst. & Commission Administrator

