



**REGIONAL ARTS
COMMISSION**
OF ST. LOUIS

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**Regional Arts Commission
Grants & Programs Committee Minutes
August 28, 2025 via ZOOM
8:45 a.m.**

Call to Order & Committee Members in Attendance

Chair Ochoa called the August 28, 2025, Grants & Programs Committee meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. and asked Sutherlin to conduct the Committee roll call.

Committee Members in Attendance

Tino Ochoa, chair, Gerad Ewing, Anita Hagerman, Jerry Gennaria, ex-officio

Yea – Ochoa, Ewing, Hagerman, Gennaria

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Committee Members Absent

Robert Arbuthnot, Beverly Isom, David Wilson

Staff Attendees

Vanessa Cooksey, Pacia Anderson, Charlie Bosco, Ann Haubrich, Leigh Winter, Chloe Smith, Lea Sutherlin

Approval of Minutes

Chair Ochoa then called for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 22, 2025, Grants & Programs Committee meeting.

Motion made by Gennaria, seconded by Hagerman, and unanimously carried to approve the May 22, 2025 Grants & Programs Committee minutes, with a correction to page 1 (FY 2025 Hotel/Motel Grants ...implemented by Blackbaud – not Blackboard). Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Ewing, Hagerman, Gennaria

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Chair Ochoa called for the following reports:

FY 2025 Hotel/Motel Grants Update (Haubrich)

Haubrich gave an update on FY 2025 Hotel/Motel Grants as follows: (1) upcoming notification to Artist Support Grantees about their funding status; (2) 135 grants awarded out of 402 eligible applications, totaling nearly \$1 million; (3) 52 out of 53 eligible Program Support Grant applications were funded, totaling just over \$441,000; (4)





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Organizational Grants - 122 out of 138 eligible applications received funding, amounting to approximately \$3.28 million; (5) a survey of grantees showed [a] positive feedback, with many respondents finding the application process accessible and helpful resources available [b] common challenges included character limits, budget preparation, and data gathering and [c] overall, satisfaction with the application experience was over 50%; and (6) the Grants Team plans to improve communication and presentation of survey results later in the fall.

Crisis Response Update (Haubrich)

Haubrich reminded that the 2025 Crisis Response Grant focuses on relief efforts for tornado-affected artists and organizations, as well as grants related to NEA rescissions. Haubrich further reminded that total of \$150,000 was allocated for these grants and gave the following update: (1) to date, \$66,300 has been approved for tornado relief for individual artists and organizations, with specific grant amounts of up to \$750 for individuals and \$2,500 for organizations; (2) most applications have been approved, with some pending review; (3) grants for organizations include names like COCA and the St. Louis Black Repertory; and (4) grants related to NEA rescissions amount to \$27,500 across 12 applications, with most approved and one applicant withdrew after receiving funds, as their NEA grant was reinstated. The update concludes with an invitation for comments or questions.

FY 2026 Hotel/Motel Grants Recommendation (Cooksey & Haubrich) VOTE

The FY 2026 Hotel/Motel Grants recommendation to pause new grant applications for FY26, allowing the organization to focus on existing grantees and strategic planning, was presented by Cooksey and Haubrich as follows: (1) noted that information for this report could be found in the packet for this meeting; (2) total budget same as FY 2025 for organizations, program support and individual artists; (3) eligible and reviewed 2025 applications will roll over into 2026 - plan involves continuing to fund FY25 grantees, implementing a lottery system for artist support grants due to high application volume, and using a data profile partnership with SMU Data Arts for due diligence; (4) no new applications accepted in 2026 - explained that this pause will give the Grants Team time to align their processes with a new strategy, improve communication, and use data from past years to refine evaluation questions and capacity-building efforts; (5) aim is to ensure fair, transparent processes, manage financial risks, and strengthen relationships with grantees; and (6) the proposal includes detailed timelines for communication, lottery procedures, and grant disbursements.

Chair Ochoa called for a motion to approve the FY 2026 Grants Work Plan as outlined in the packet for this meeting.

Motion made by Ewing, seconded by Hagerman, and unanimously carried to approve the FY 2026 Grants Work Plan as outlined in the packet for this meeting. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Ewing, Hagerman, Gennaria

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Preparation for FY 2027 Grants Cycle (Cooksey & Haubrich)

Cooksey noted that information on this report could be found in the packet for this meeting. She (Cooksey) and Haubrich then reported on preparation for the FY 2027 Grants Cycle as follows: (1) emphasized community





engagement and stakeholder input throughout FY26; (2) key activities include hosting a series of informed meetings with the Grants and Programs Committee, community members, and experts to shape grantmaking strategies - meetings will feature presentations on RAC's strategic roadmap, sector challenges, financial analyses, and panels involving grantees of various sizes, especially medium-sized organizations; (3) process aims to explore RAC's dual roles as a grantmaker and a local arts agency, with discussions planned on funding models and organizational roles; (4) goal is to develop a comprehensive plan by September 2026, culminating in a commission vote to finalize the funding approach for FY27; and (5) the activities are aligned with RAC's strategic objectives of investing, amplifying, and leading within the arts sector.

Ochoa noted that this process has been well thought out by the team.

Hagerman concurred.

Program Update (Haubrich/Anderson)

CAT Institute - VOTE

Haubrich, Anderson and Cooksey gave the following update and report on the Community Arts Training (CAT) program as follows: (1) Background & History - The CAT Institute, started in 1997 by Ann Haubrich, is the oldest sustained training program of its kind in the U.S., graduating over 450 alumni across 27 cohorts and various sectors, including arts, healthcare, sciences, and local government; (2) Evolution & Future Plans - a task force comprised of highly respected CATs/Alumni have been working since last December to develop a proposal for transitioning CAT from a RAC (Regional Arts Commission) legacy program to an independent 501(c)(3) organization, and this move aims to expand programming, increase alumni engagement, and strengthen organizational stability; (3) Program Highlights - CAT provides multi-month training focusing on community entry/exit, trust-building, collaboration, and community engagement, with hands-on projects such as partnerships with Great Rivers Greenway; (4) Goals & Outcomes - Key goals include expanding programming (e.g., credentialing, national convenings), increasing alumni participation, securing diverse funding sources (grants, memberships, donations), and establishing a sustainable organizational structure with dedicated boards, including RAC representation; (5) Funding & Budget - the initial request is for RAC to support CAT with phased funding over three years [\$150,000, then decreasing to \$75,000 annually], with detailed budgets outlining personnel, operational, and program costs, with a total budget for year one of approximately \$178,000; (6) Benefits & Rationale - the transition allows CAT to better adapt to changing city dynamics, organizational needs, and to address challenges like inclusivity beyond city and county limits (e.g., East St. Louis), and aims to maintain the community connection and support for artists, especially during uncertain times; (7) Next Steps & Support - requested that this Committee approve the continuation of this developing transition, with the understanding that further structural and organizational work remains, with a goal is to honor the roots of RAC while expanding CAT's impact.

The Committee asked for and received clarification on how the program's scope would expand to include broader communities, statutory restrictions related to funding, and the importance of the partnership between RAC and CAT during this transition.



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Chair Ochoa called for a motion to approve to continue developing this transition, with the understanding that further structural and organizational work remains, and with a goal to honor the roots of RAC while expanding CAT's impact.

Motion made by Gennaria, seconded by Hagerman, and unanimously carried to approve to continue developing this transition. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Ewing, Hagerman, Gennaria

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Artist INC

Haubrich gave a brief update on Artist Inc., the professional development program for artists, its ongoing success, and consideration for plans for renewal for one year, at a reduced price.

Roll Call & Adjournment

Chair Ochoa called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Hagerman, seconded by Ewing, and unanimously approved to adjourn the August 28, 2025 Grants & Programs Committee meeting at 10:02 a.m.

Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Ewing, Hagerman, Gennaria

Nay – none

Abstain - none

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

Attachments

- Grants & Programs Committee Minutes, May 22, 2025
- Hotel/Motel Grants Comparison List
- 2026 Grants Work Plan
- 2027 Grantmaking Strategy Development

