



**REGIONAL ARTS  
COMMISSION**  
OF ST. LOUIS

# Organizational Grant FAQs

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**Organizational Grants are available to arts and culture mission-driven nonprofit organizations that produce and present arts and culture programming in St. Louis city and county.**

## ***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](mailto:MS_RACSTL_Grantmaking@blackbaud.com).

## ***IS AN ORGANIZATIONAL GRANT RIGHT FOR MY ORGANIZATION?***

- Organization needs 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.

## ***IS THERE A PRE-APPLICATION REQUIREMENT?***

Organizational Grant applicants are not required to submit a pre-application but to have your application reviewed by RAC staff before final submission, please submit a pre-application via the grantmaking system between February 5 and February 12, 2024. Feedback from RAC staff on the pre-applications will be provided from February 27 through March 18, 2024.

## ***WHAT ARE THE KEY GRANT DATES AND DEADLINES?***

[Click here](#) for a comprehensive list of important grant dates and deadlines.

## ***WHAT ARE THE ORGANIZATIONAL GRANT RESTRICTIONS?***

[Click here](#) to review the list of programs, projects, or events that RAC does not fund.

## ***WHAT ARE THE 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, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

***IS THERE A CAP ON A REQUEST AMOUNT?***

The maximum amount of funding is \$100,000. Please refer to the funding tiers table in the [guidelines](#) to see how much your organization is eligible to apply for.

***ARE MATCHING FUNDS REQUIRED?***

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

***WHAT ARE THE FUNDING CRITERIA?***

- Artistic Essentials (weighted at 40%): An organization that produces or presents culturally and artistically significant work, and that supports a full creative life for every St. Louisan.
- Community Benefit (weighted at 30%): An organization that demonstrates broad community benefit while advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Capacity & Sustainability (weighted at 30%): An organization that intentionally plans for organizational capacity and sustainability; and with solid leadership that advances a strong organizational culture, demonstrated by a positive community reputation, consistent and clear communications, and efficient decision-making.

***WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED AS PART OF MY APPLICATION?***

- [Organizational Budget](#) (Template download from RAC website)
- [Organizational Health Worksheet](#) (Download from RAC website)
- [990 Worksheet](#) (Download from RAC website)
- Board of Directors List (List to include roles and affiliations)
- Financial Statements for the two most recently completed fiscal years and most recent audit (If available)
- Up to 3 Work Samples (In one PDF document)
- Organizational Chart (Organizations with budgets \$500,000+)
- Critical Review (Optional)
- DEI Statement, Policy, or Plan (Optional)
- Strategic Plan (Optional)

***MY ORGANIZATION RECEIVED ITS 501(c)(3) LESS THAN ONE YEAR AGO, AND WE HAVEN’T FILED AN IRS 990, IRS 990-EZ, or IRS 990-N YET. WHAT DO WE DO TO PASS THE ELIGIBILITY QUIZ AND COMPLETE THE APPLICATION?***

If the organization received its 501(c)(3) less than one year ago, please contact us at [grants@racstl.org](mailto:grants@racstl.org) for instructions.

### ***HOW CAN I COMPLETE THE RAC BUDGET FORM WITHOUT PURCHASING EXCEL?***

An alternative to using Excel is to recreate the template in Google Sheets or Apple Numbers. Google Sheets is free, but you will have to recreate the [template](#) and get it as close as possible to the Excel version. Make sure to include the two sections and all top horizontal column headers. **The budget needs to be saved as a PDF to be uploaded into the system.**

### ***CAN I SUBMIT VIDEOS OR VIDEO LINKS AS WORK SAMPLES?***

Yes, you can submit video links as work samples. Please include your links in a word document and upload the document as a PDF. **All work samples need to be saved in one PDF document to be uploaded into the system.**

### ***WHAT DOES THE APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS ENTAIL?***

Grant reviewers play a central role in RAC's annual grantmaking process. Reviewers commit to the following:

- Attend/view an online orientation session to learn how to review the applications according to the guidelines and review criteria.
- Attend/view a bias/cultural competency workshop.
- Read the assigned applications, including videos, photos, recordings, or other work samples by the communicated deadline. (Reviewers that do not meet the deadline can receive an extension but do not receive the honorarium.)
- Attend a virtual review meeting with other panelists to discuss and rate applications with the greatest variance in scoring from the initial round of reviews.
- If necessary, hear appeals and render a final rating.
- Provide feedback to RAC on the application review process for improvement purposes.

Note: Grant reviewers will independently read and rate all applications within the Blackbaud GMS online portal. Staff will review the ratings and make final recommendations for funding based on reviewer ratings.

### ***HOW ARE GRANTS RATED?***

There are three review sections that correspond to RAC review criteria: Artistic Essentials; Community Benefit; and Capacity/Sustainability. 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. The points assigned to each question in the application are used to determine the final award amount. Points are combined to provide an overall application score. Reviewer scores for an application are then averaged for the final application score.

Final application scores are determined in whole numbers. Most applications will receive an average that is not a whole number. For example, if an application receives a 60.7 overall score, this means the application's final score is 60. The final score is determined by the whole number that precedes the decimal and will not be rounded up nor down.

For more details on the grant rating system, refer to the [Organizational Grant Guidelines](#).

### ***HOW DOES THE PANEL REVIEW PROCESS WORK?***

The panel process requires a panel review of applications if ratings have a large variance—and where comments vastly differed—allowing reviewers to revisit applications where there may have been a misunderstanding or even bias. **Please note, not all applications will be reviewed at the panel meetings, just applications with a great variance in reviewer ratings.**

***WILL APPLICANTS NOT REVIEWED AT THE PANEL MEETING BE ELIGIBLE TO FILE AND APPEAL?***

Yes, all applicants will be able to file an appeal if they have cause. If an applicant finds a misstatement of fact was made upon reading reviewer comments OR listening to the recording of the application's review; 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 may be filed with RAC staff.

***WHY ARE THE APPLICANTS NO LONGER ABLE TO PRESENT THEIR APPEALS TO THE REVIEW PANEL?***

RAC is streamlining many of its processes to save time for applicants, reviewers, and staff. To ensure efficiency, RAC staff will present the appeal, if eligible, based on the filed appeal.

***WILL VIRTUAL MEETINGS BE OPEN TO ALL APPLICANTS OR ONLY THOSE BEING REVIEWED?***

All virtual meetings will be recorded and published on the website so that applicants can view and listen to the meeting.

***HOW IS ORGANIZATIONAL GRANT FUNDING DISTRIBUTED?***

The available source of funding for RAC Organizational Grants is not sufficient to meet applicant demand. The final distribution of funding is dependent on several factors. These variables factor into the final funding matrix:

- The available funding
- The number of applications submitted
- The applicant score
- The number of applicants awarded funding

Given the above information, the percentage for funding for which your application is eligible may not be your grant award amount.

***IF MY ORGANIZATION IS APPROVED FOR A GRANT, HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED?***

If awarded a grant, applicants will be notified via the Blackbaud GMS portal and a direct email.

***WILL APPLICANTS BE ABLE TO VIEW THE SCORES RECEIVED, WHETHER OR NOT THE GRANT WAS MADE? ADDITIONALLY, IF WE DO NOT RECEIVE RAC FUNDING IN 2024, WILL WE RECEIVE FEEDBACK TO BETTER POSITION OURSELVES FOR FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES?***

You may request your scores and reviewer feedback in order to improve your grant application for the next opportunity by emailing [grants@racstl.org](mailto:grants@racstl.org).

***WHAT ARE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?***

RAC will issue final report instructions and the report form through the Blackbaud GMS platform. Each grantee is required to submit a final report in accordance with the timeline. Should a grantee not complete the reporting requirement, they will be ineligible to apply for RAC grants in the future.