



**REGIONAL ARTS
COMMISSION**
OF ST. LOUIS

2025 ORGANIZATIONAL GRANT GUIDELINES

Pre-Applications/Applications Open: Tuesday, January 21, 2025
Pre-Application Deadline: Tuesday, January 28, 2025
Application Deadline: Monday, March 3, 2025

www.racstl.org/organizationalgrants

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Organizational Support

Because RAC is invested in the health and success of the St. Louis area arts and culture sector, we provide arts and culture nonprofits with the opportunity to apply for unrestricted funding. This enhances our grantees' capacity, strengthens resilience in our vibrant arts organizations, and builds equity into our processes. Unrestricted funding allows grantees the flexibility to direct spending where it is needed, while addressing key infrastructure issues.

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.

Pre-Application Process

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.

Application Review 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; with solid leadership that advances a strong organizational culture, demonstrated by a positive community reputation, consistent and clear communications, and efficient decision-making.

Rating System

Reviewer ratings correlate to the application criteria and are designed to simplify the review process for the applicant and reviewers.

Please note that every year is a fresh start for applicants and RAC approaches its grantmaking with a "zero-based" principle – for example, if an organization received a grant in the amount of \$25,000 in 2024, it is not guaranteed to receive that amount in 2025.

New in 2025: Staff Review Score and Possible Commission Recommendations or Stipulations

RAC staff will be able to move an application score down one to four points based on financial or reputational risk.

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

No Matching Fund Requirement

Matching funds are not required for Organizational Grant applicants.

Please note: Although there are no matching fund requirements for Organizational Grants, RAC encourages organizations to plan for and secure diverse revenue streams and to indicate those in the budget.

Funding Tiers

For 2025, organizations may apply for any amount up to the maximum for the corresponding budget level.

Arts & Culture Organizations Unrestricted Grants	
Annual Operating Budget	Maximum Grant Amount
>\$2,000,000	\$100,000
≤\$2,000,000	\$50,000
≤ \$500,000	\$25,000

Grantmaking Process

RAC follows a four-stage grantmaking process. The entire process is online: **(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.

Submission Notification

Once an application is submitted through Blackbaud, an applicant will receive email notification regarding submission. If an applicant does not receive an email from noreply@yourcause.com, the application has not been submitted.

Please refer to the 2025 RAC Grant Application Glossary for definitions of unfamiliar terms.

Grantmaking System Technical Assistance

For technical questions while working in the online system, please email

MS_RACSTL_Grantmaking@blackbaud.com.

ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDING

2025 GRANT GUIDELINES

PRE-APPLICATION DUE DATE: Tuesday, January 28, 2025

APPLICATION DUE DATE: Monday, March 3, 2025

GRANT ACTIVITY PERIOD: July 1, 2025- June 31, 2026



I. REQUEST

BACKGROUND

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.

IS ORGANIZATIONAL GRANT RIGHT FOR YOUR 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.

ORGANIZATIONAL GRANT RESTRICTION

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

GRANT ELIGIBILITY

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.

MATCHING FUNDS

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

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING CRITERIA?

Organizational Grant applications will respond to three **grant review criteria**:

1. Artistic Essentials (weighted at 40%)

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

- Application describes the organization and resources necessary to carry out the organization's artistic activities, and the impact of those ventures on the organization.
- Conveys aspects of the organization, including clear plans for programmatic execution such as location, dates, frequency, etc.
- Demonstrates cultural and artistic significance and how the organization is relevant to the arts & culture sector and to artists, and is supported in the marketplace.
- Indicates clear commitment to recruit, engage, and compensate artists—with an emphasis on St. Louis artists.
- Organization demonstrates commitment to excellence of artistic craft and skills.
- Organization and its programs contribute to innovation and new thinking in the art form and/or wider culture.
- Organization plans for artistic growth or expansion of artistic aspirations or artistic risk.
- Work samples indicate alignment with organization's mission and demonstrate cultural and/or artistic significance.
- Organizational goals, objectives, and outcomes are realistic and relative to operational and/or program activities and planned operational and/or program execution. Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize the SMART Framework in creating their goals, objectives, and outcomes – **Specific / Measurable / Achievable / Relevant / Time-Bound**.
- Assessment/Evaluation efforts are in alignment with the operations and/or programmatic activities, and systems are in place to track the results and impact of the organization's work.

2. Community Benefit (weighted at 30%):

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

- Organization's program attendance, participation, or other measures indicate that the community or constituency values the programs.

- Conveys organization's community 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.
- Organization's leadership and its culture is known for creating an inclusive environment.
- 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 to create and participate.
- Offerings, information, and 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 strengthening relationship with existing audience.
- Demonstrates consideration of affordability in offerings (free and/or reduced-price admission, scholarship, etc.)
- Organization's board-approved DEI statement, policy, or plan informs programmatic activities (if applicable).
- 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.

3. Capacity & Sustainability (weighted at 30%):

An organization that intentionally plans for operational and/or program capacity and sustainability.

- Includes a realistic budget with a clear budget narrative, explaining a deficit or surplus.
- Budget identifies other existing or potential and reasonable revenue streams.
- Contingency plan in place to support operations and/or program completion.
- Conveys plans to maintain operations and programs throughout the funding period, while advancing the mission of the organization.
- Organization uploads **two years** of financial statements from the most recently completed fiscal years (If your organization has an audit, this may be used in lieu of the financial statements) **AND** the most recent 990. The financial statements will include a Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) **AND** a Statement of Activities (Profit & Loss Statement).
- Indicates an active and engaged Board of Directors.
- Sustainability 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 the organization.
- Evidence of dynamic adaptability – the capacity of the organization for self-awareness combined with an ability to plan its business, prioritize and implement its plans, track performance against its plan, and make appropriate corrections as circumstances change.
- Organization demonstrates the capacity of the 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.

ORGANIZATIONAL GRANT APPLICATION REQUIRED DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

- Organizational Budget Template ([Download from RAC Website](#))
- Organizational Health Worksheet ([Download from RAC Website](#))
- Most recent Form 990 submitted to IRS
- 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). Financial Statements will include a Statement of Financial Position (also known as a Balance Sheet) and a Statement of Activities (also known as a Profit & Loss Statement). *Please note that if appropriate financial statements are not uploaded, it will impact the application score.*
- Up to 3 Work Samples
- Staff List, including title (for organizations with budgets \$500,000+ OR organizations with more than 10 full-time employees, upload Senior Staff List, including title)
- Critical Review (a Critical Review is a published analysis or critique of presentation/show/performance/exhibition that evaluates the strength and/or weaknesses of said presentation's execution, ideas, or content) (optional)
- DEI Statement, Policy, or Plan (optional)
- Strategic Plan (optional)

II. DECISION-MAKING

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

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

- Attend/view an orientation session 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 by the communicated deadline.
- If necessary, 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.
- If necessary, hear appeals and render a final rating.
- Provide feedback on the application review process for improvement purposes.

Note: Application reviewers will independently read and rate all assigned applications within the GMS online portal. Staff will review the ratings and make final recommendations for funding based on reviewer ratings. Only applications with a great variance will be discussed during the virtual review meeting.

Financial Review Panel for Organizations with Budgets of \$500,000 or More

For organizational applicants with an annual budget of \$500,000 or more, a Financial Review Panel will

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

Financial Review for Organizations with Budgets of Less Than \$500,000

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.

Additional RAC Staff Scoring

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.

Eligible reviewers receive an honorarium of \$200. This is a demonstration of RAC's acknowledgement of and appreciation for the time and effort invested in our arts community. Reviewers who do not meet the deadline can receive an extension but do not receive the honorarium.

RATING SYSTEM

Each application will be scored according to RAC's review criteria and the rating system, shown in the table below.

- 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.

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

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.

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.

Using the application rating key: Use your application overall score and find where it lies in the point range column (highlighted yellow). Use that column to find your applications overall rating, the rating definition, and the percentage of your ask for which you are eligible.

Application Rating Key			
Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range	Percent Funding Eligible
Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of all three review criteria. Application is exemplary.	90-100	100% of ask
Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of all three review criteria. Application is strong.	69-89	80% of ask
Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of all three review criteria. Application is good.	48-68	60% of ask
Fair	Applicant provides limited evidence of all three review criteria. Application needs work and is not eligible for funding.	20-47	0% of ask No Funding
Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of all three review criteria. Application is weak and not eligible for funding.	0-19	0% of ask No Funding

Please note: The available annual funding for RAC Organizational Grants is not sufficient to meet applicant demand.

The final distribution of funding is dependent on several factors:

- **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.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS AND RATING

Cultural and 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*.

Application Question		Review Criteria	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
		Cultural and/or Artistic Essentials			
1	Essentials (300 word maximum): Provide an overview of the organization and program(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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). 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of essentials.	14-16 pts
			Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of essentials.	11-13 pts
			Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of essentials.	8-10 pts
			Fair	Applicant provides limited evidence of essentials.	4-7 pts
			Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of essentials.	0-3 pts
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of cultural and artistic significance.	11-12 pts
			Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of cultural and artistic significance.	8-10 pts
			Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of cultural and artistic significance.	5-7 pts
			Fair	Applicant provides limited evidence of cultural and artistic significance.	3-4 pts
			Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of	0-2 pts

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work samples indicate alignment with organizational/programmatic activities. 		cultural and artistic significance.	
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• Upload: up to 3 Work Samples

<p>Organization Goals: What does success look like? (300 word maximum)</p> <p>Identify and explain the organization's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goals Objectives Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of program goals, objectives and outcomes.	11-12 pts
		Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of program goals, objectives and outcomes.	8-10 pts
		Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of program goals, objectives and outcomes.	5-7 pts
		Fair	Applicant provides limited evidence of program goals, objectives and outcomes.	3-4 pts
		Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of program goals, objectives and outcomes.	0-2 pts

Community Benefit (30% weighting)
 Organization that demonstrates broad **community benefit and contributes to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the community.**

Application Question	Review Criteria	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
	Community Benefit			
4	Audience: Provide an overview of your organization's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance, participation, or other measures indicate that the audience or a 	Exemplary Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of a clear intended audience.	9-10 pts

	<p>intended audience. (300 word maximum)</p>	<p>constituency values the organization’s programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of a clear intended audience.	7-8 pts
			Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of a clear intended audience.	5-6 pts
			Fair	Applicant provides limited evidence of a clear intended audience.	3-4 pts
			Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of a clear intended audience.	0-2 pts
5	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 known for an inclusive environment. 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.	9-10 pts
			Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.	7-8 pts
			Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.	5-6 pts
			Fair	Applicant provides limited evidence of commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.	3-4 pts
			Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of commitment to	0-2 pts

<p>If your organization has a board-approved DEI 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If organization has uploaded a board-approved DEI statement, policy, or plan, it informs programmatic activities. 		<p>diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.</p>	
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***Upload: DEI Statement/Policy/Plan (optional)**

<p>6</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Exemplary</p>	<p>Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of community engagement.</p>	<p>9-10 pts</p>
			<p>Strong</p>	<p>Applicant provides strong evidence of community engagement.</p>	<p>7-8 pts</p>
			<p>Good</p>	<p>Applicant provides sufficient evidence of community engagement.</p>	<p>5-6 pts</p>
			<p>Fair</p>	<p>Applicant provides limited evidence of community engagement.</p>	<p>3-4 pts</p>
			<p>Weak</p>	<p>Applicant provides little to no evidence of community engagement.</p>	<p>0-2 pts</p>

Capacity & Sustainability (30% weighting)
An organization that intentionally plans for program capacity & sustainability.

Application Question	Review Criteria	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
	<p>Capacity & Sustainability</p>			

7	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of a clear budget.	9-10 pts
			Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of a clear budget.	7-8 pts
			Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of a clear budget.	5-6 pts
			Fair	Applicant provides limited evidence of a clear budget.	3-4 pts
			Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of a clear budget.	0-2 pts

***Upload: Operational Budget**

8	Organizational Health: Upload the provided organizational health worksheet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of overall organizational health.	9-10 pts
			Strong.	Applicant provides strong evidence of overall organizational health.	7-8 pts
			Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of overall organizational health.	5-6 pts
			Fair	Applicant provides limited evidence of overall organizational health.	3-4 pts
			Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of overall organizational health.	0-2 pts

***Upload: Organizational Health Worksheet**

9	Sustainability (500 word maximum): Please provide a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement complements what is known about the organization and the 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of sustainability.	9-10 pts
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growth & development statement.	<p>information provided in the budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of sustainability.	7-8 pts
		Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of sustainability.	5-6 pts
		Fair	Applicant provides limited evidence of sustainability.	3-4 pts
		Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of sustainability.	0-2 pts

RATING TRANSPARENCY

Once the application closes on March 3, 2025, application reviewers will read and rate all applications assigned to them within the online grantmaking portal. At this point, staff may move an application score down one to four points based on financial, operational, or reputational risk. 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 a virtual meeting that includes each reviewer assigned to the application and RAC staff. During this meeting, reviewers will provide a second rating for the applications discussed. 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 the transcripts published on the website so that applicants may review them.

APPEAL PROCESS

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

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.

To be considered, applicants must have factual grounds for an appeal. Dissatisfaction with a rating or denial of an award is not sufficient grounds for an appeal. Fact-based 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 different from 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 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 different from than those appearing in the RAC guidelines, an appeal form may be sent to 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.

If RAC staff 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 are not open to applicants. Using simplified Robert's Rules of Order, the reviewers may vote in favor (majority rules) of approving a change to the final rating. The results of the appeals call will be shared with the applicant within seven business days.

NOTIFICATION

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS AGREEMENT

Once awarded, the grantee 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 receive instructions on how to do this through the GMS portal and in email communications.

III. GRANT MANAGEMENT

PAYMENT PROCESSING

Each Organizational Grant recipient will be asked to sign the terms and conditions agreement before collecting the payment. Grant awards are disbursed in a single payment through automatic deposit to the grantee's designated bank account through RAC's Bill.com electronic payments platform. After signing the agreement, grantees will receive a Bill.com email prompting them to create an account.

Instructions will be emailed to grantees and are also available on the RAC website to guide grantees through this process.

The Organizational Grant payment is made in one lump sum disbursement equaling the total award amount.

IV. ANALYSIS

REPORTING

RAC will issue final report instructions and the report form through the Blackbaud online grantmaking platform.

Each grantee is required to submit a final report on or before August 15, 2026. Should a grantee not complete the reporting requirement, they will be ineligible to apply for RAC grants in the future.

WHO TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS ABOUT GRANT APPLICATION OR REVIEW PROCESS

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

QUESTIONS ABOUT BLACKBAUD GRANTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Leigh or Charlie
grants@racstl.org

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT BLACKBAUD GRANTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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