Program Support Grant FAQs

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.

HOW WILL I COMMUNICATE WITH RAC REGARDING MY APPLICATION?
Add noreply@yourcause.com AND mail@grantapplication.com AND grants@racstl.org to your address book or safe senders list to ensure you receive all communications from RAC.

IS PROGRAM SUPPORT RIGHT FOR MY ORGANIZATION?
- 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 – i.e.: a ten-day jazz festival– could apply for the event, or they could identify certain components (such as the presentation of a key artist and the associated activities) for their application.
- Applicants may apply for any or all phases of a project, from its planning through its execution.
- Programs may be new and untested or ongoing with proven track records.
- Programs may cover a broad range of singular or multiple artistic disciplines.

IS THERE A PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS?
There is no pre-application process for RAC Program Support applicants in 2025.

WHAT ARE THE KEY GRANT DATES AND DEADLINES?
Click here for a comprehensive list of important grant dates and deadlines.

WHAT ARE THE PROGRAM SUPPORT GRANT RESTRICTIONS?
Click here to review the list of programs, projects, or events that RAC does not fund.

WHAT ARE THE GRANT ELIGIBILTY REQUIREMENTS?
Eligible organizations meet the following requirements:

- **Local focus:** Arts and cultural programs 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.
- **Timeframe:** The program for which you are applying must take place between July 1, 2025, and June 31, 2026.

HOW MUCH IN GRANT FUNDING CAN I REQUEST?
The maximum amount of funding an applicant can request in Program Support is $10,000.

CAN I APPLY USING A FISCAL SPONSOR?
Applicants are eligible to apply for up to $10,000.00 with a fiscal sponsor (agent) in Program Support, provided that:

- The fiscal sponsor is a nonprofit corporation 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, the applicant and the fiscal sponsor must both sign the Terms and Conditions Agreement issued by RAC.
- If planning to apply with a fiscal sponsor, it is highly recommended that you come to one of the posted Office Hours sessions to discuss your application.

WHAT IS MY PROGRAM'S APPLICATION CATEGORY?
Applicants will apply in one of the following categories:
- Arts and Culture: Performances, concerts, exhibitions, readings, publications, arts education, and similar activities
- 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 local and out-of-town visitors
- Community Arts: Initiatives/Programs using the arts as a tool for social change and/or civic engagement

ARE MATCHING FUNDS REQUIRED?
Matching funds are not required for Program Support grant applicants. Please note, although there are no matching fund requirements for Program Support grants, RAC encourages organizations to plan for and secure diverse revenue streams and to indicate those in the budget.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING CRITERIA?
Program Support Grant applications will respond to three grant review criteria:

1. Artistic Essentials (weighted at 40%)
A project or program that produces or presents culturally and artistically significant work that supports a full creative life for every St. Louisan.

2. Community Benefit (weighted at 30%):
A program that demonstrates broad community benefit and contributes to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the community.

3. Capacity (weighted at 30%):
A project that intentionally considers its capacity to complete the program.

WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED AS PART OF MY APPLICATION?

- Program Support Budget Template (**Download from RAC Website**)

- Organizational Health Worksheet (this form to be completed with information about the non-arts organization or the fiscal sponsor) (**Download from RAC Website**)

- Most recent Form 990 submitted to IRS (IRS Form-990 of the non-arts organization or fiscal sponsor)

- Board of Directors List (list to include officers and affiliations) (board list of the non-arts organization or the fiscal sponsor)

- 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). (financial statements of the non-arts organization or the fiscal sponsor) *Please note that if appropriate financial statements are not uploaded, it will impact the application score.*

- Up to 3 Work Samples

- 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 (from the non-arts organization or the fiscal sponsor) (optional)

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 will need to be saved as a PDF 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. Grant reviewers independently read and rate all applications within the Blackbaud grantmaking online portal. Staff will review the ratings and make final recommendations for funding based on reviewer ratings.

How are grants rated?
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.
- 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 [Program Support Grant Guidelines](#).

IS THERE AN APPEALS PROCESS?
There is no appeals process for the Program Support application process.

IF I AM APPROVED FOR A GRANT, HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED?
If awarded a grant, applicants will be notified via the Blackbaud grantmaking portal and a direct email.

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.**

HOW IS PROGRAM SUPPORT GRANT FUNDING DISTRIBUTED?
The available source of funding for RAC Program Support 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.

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 2025, 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.

WHAT ARE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?
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.