



**REGIONAL ARTS
COMMISSION**
OF ST. LOUIS

ARTIST SUPPORT GRANT GUIDELINES



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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.

Grantmaking System Technical Assistance

For technical questions while working in the online system, please email MS_RACSTL_Grantmaking@blackbaud.com.

Pre-application Process

Artist Support Grant applicants are not required to submit a pre-application but if you would like your application reviewed by RAC staff before final submission, you are welcome to submit a “pre-application” via the grantmaking system between February 15 and February 20, 2023. Feedback from RAC staff on the pre-applications will be provided from February 27 through March 17, 2023.

Artist Collective

This year, in addition to individual artists, the Artist Support Grants will also allow application submission from Artist Collectives. An artist collective consists of at least two consistent members and have a history of creating together for at least one year prior to the application submission date. 501(c)3 organizations are NOT eligible to apply for an Artists Support Grant. All members of the collective must meet the eligibility requirements outlined below. One member of the collective may submit the application and serve as the application contact. The applying member will ultimately be responsible for signing the application, and if awarded, the Terms & Conditions Agreement. Artists may apply for either an individual artist grant OR an artist collective grant, NOT both.

Grant Review Criteria

- Artistic Essentials (weighted at 40%): A culturally and artistically significant practice or work that contributes to the creative life of the artist and, ultimately, to St. Louis.
- Community Benefit (weighted at 30%): An individual or artist collective who demonstrates broad community benefit with a practice of work that considers diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Capacity & Sustainability (weighted at 30%): An individual or artist collective who is intentional about artistic/practice capacity and sustainability.

New Rating System

RAC is implementing a new rating system this year. The new ratings are directly correlated to the application criteria and is designed to simplify the review process.



ARTIST SUPPORT GRANT

2023 GRANT GUIDELINES

PRE-APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, February 20, 2023

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, March 27, 2023

GRANT ACTIVITY PERIOD: July 1, 2023 - June 31, 2024

I. REQUEST

BACKGROUND

The Regional Arts Commission's (RAC) Artist Support Grant (ASG) serves as funding for the career advancement of individual artists. This grant provides funds for an individual artist's or artist collective's projects, needs, or creative opportunities in all artistic disciplines. Direct support enables diverse artists of all disciplines to advance their careers and complete creative projects. It is designed to be flexible and accessible and to encourage creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustained commitment to artistic work.

IS ARTIST SUPPORT RIGHT FOR YOU?

Grant funds may be used for a variety of purposes including but not limited to equipment and materials, rental space, arts-related travel, conference fees, living artist wage, project completion, professional and artistic development, training, and other resources for an individual artist or artist collective of any discipline.

An artist collective consists of at least two consistent members and have a history of creating together for at least one year prior to the application. 501(c)3 organizations are NOT eligible. All members of the collective must meet the eligibility requirements outlined below. One member of the collective may submit the application. The applying member will ultimately be responsible for signing the application, and if awarded, the Terms & Conditions Agreement. Artists may apply for either an individual artist grant OR an artist collective grant, NOT both.

ARTIST SUPPORT GRANT RESTRICTIONS

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

GRANT ELIGIBILITY

An individual artist is eligible to apply for an Artist Support Grant if the following requirements are met:

- The artist is 19 years or older
- The artist is not enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student
- The artist is a current resident of St. Louis City or County and has maintained primary residence in St. Louis City or County for at least one year (verifiable documentation required)
- For the individual artist: In the past three years, the artist has created and presented their own original works to the public or performed for the public (verifiable documentation required)
- For the Artist Collective: At least one of the artists has created and presented their own original works in the past three years AND the collective has created and presented together for at least one year (verifiable documentation required)

GRANT AMOUNTS

The maximum amount of funding an individual artist or artist collective can receive is \$7,500.

NOTE: All awards are deemed taxable income. Recipients will receive a tax form W-9 for the 2023 tax year.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING CRITERIA?

Artist Support grant applications will respond to three **grant review criteria**:

1. Cultural and/or Artistic Essentials (weighted at 40%):

A culturally and artistically significant practice or work that contributes to the creative life of the artist and, ultimately, to St. Louis.

- Includes clear plans such as location, dates, frequency (as applicable). Must provide clear “who, what, when, where, and why” information.
- Proposed work contributes to the artist’s practice, skills, and craft.
- Proposed work contributes to innovation and new thinking in the artform and wider culture.
- Indicates how grant funds will be used.
- Demonstrates artistic significance and the project is relevant to the artistic field and/or the arts & culture sector.
- Work samples indicate alignment with what is outlined in the application.
- Goals, objectives, and outcomes are realistic and relative to project or need and planned execution.
- Artist considers and articulates documentation/dissemination of work (if applicable).

2. Community Benefit (weighted at 30%):

Artist demonstrates broad community benefit with a practice or work and contributes to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the community.

- Intended audience is clearly defined.
- Direct (public project) or indirect (artist need) contributions to the community are articulated.
- Understanding of community/market is indicated.
- Creates and presents art that represents the telling of stories of diverse populations (if applicable).
- Provides equitable opportunities to create and participate (if applicable).
- Activities/artwork, and the locations where they are provided, are intentionally accessible to all people (if applicable).
- Efforts in place to develop meaningful collaborations with diverse groups to expand artistic practice (if applicable).
- Addresses intersection between artistic intention and community concerns/interests.
- Demonstrates community participation/connection (if applicable).
- Specifies community partnerships that increase engagement (if applicable).

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

Artist is intentional about artistic/practice capacity and sustainability.

- Has a realistic and balanced budget with a clear budget narrative.
- Budgeting is appropriate for the scope of what artist proposes.
- Budget indicates diverse revenue streams (if applicable).
- Project or program has a contingency plan to support program completion.
- Clear and ongoing commitment to planning, goal setting, and promotions (where applicable).
- Describes a connection to the artist's earlier work or represents an intentional shift from what the artist has done in the past as indicated by the artist statement and CV or resume.
- Statement complements what is known about the project/need and the information provided in the budget.
- Applicant describes how RAC grant will be a catalyst for artistic and professional growth.

ARTIST SUPPORT GRANT APPLICATION REQUIRED DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

- Proof of Residency Documentation (i.e., voter registration, automobile registration, income tax or property tax receipt) (for each member of artist collective)
- Artist Statement (either a narrative document or a link to a 90 second video)
- Budget Template (Download from [RAC Website](#))
- Resume or CV for individual artist or for each member of Artist Collective
- Up to 3 Work Samples
- List of contact information for Artist Collective members (if applicable)

II. DECISION-MAKING

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

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 review criteria and guidelines.
- Read the assigned applications, including videos, photos, recordings, or other work samples by the communicated deadline.
 - **Reviewers who 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 first round of reviews.
- If necessary, hear appeals and render a final rating.
- Provide feedback on the application review process for improvement purposes.

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

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.

RATING SYSTEM

Each application will be scored according to RAC's review criteria and a new 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, needs work, 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.

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 application’s 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	100% of Ask
Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of all three review criteria. Application is good.	48-68	100% of Ask
Needs Work	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 Artist Support grants is not sufficient to meet applicant demand. The final distribution of funding is dependent on several factors: 1. The available funding; 2. The number of applications submitted; 3. The applicant score; and 4. 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

Application Question 1

Cultural and Artistic Essentials (40% weighting) A culturally and artistically significant practice or work that contributes to <i>the creative life of the artist and, ultimately, to St. Louis.</i>				
Application Question	Review Criteria (Cultural and/or Artistic Essentials)	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
1 Essentials (300 word maximum): Provide an overview of grant request. Indicate if funds will be used for a personal need to support your artistic practice or a public project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes clear plans such as location, dates, frequency (as applicable) (the who, what, when, where, and why). Proposed work contributes to the artist’s practice, skills, and craft. Proposed work contributes to innovation and new thinking in the artform and wider culture. Indicates how grant funds will be used. 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of artistic essentials.	14-16 pts
		Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of artistic essentials.	11-13 pts
		Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of artistic essentials.	8-10 pts
		Needs Work	Applicant provides limited evidence of artistic essentials.	4-7 pts
		Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of artistic essentials.	0-3 pts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upload: Artist Statement. Video or PDF file (you may choose to upload a 90 second video of your artist statement OR a one-page pdf) 				

Application Question 2

Application Question		Review Criteria (Cultural and/or Artistic Essentials)	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
2	Artistic Significance (300 word maximum): Explain the artistic intention of your work and/or practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates artistic significance and the project is relevant to the artistic field and/or the arts & culture sector. • Work samples indicate alignment with what is outlined in the application. 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of artistic significance.	11-12 pts
			Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of artistic significance.	8-10 pts
			Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of artistic significance.	5-7 pts
			Needs Work	Applicant provides limited evidence of artistic significance.	3-4 pts
			Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of artistic significance.	0-2 pts

Application Question 3

Application Question	Review Criteria (Cultural and/or Artistic Essentials)	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
<p>3</p> <p>Goals (300 word maximum):</p> <p>What does success look like for this artist project or need?</p> <p>Identify and explain your:</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 project or need, and planned execution. • Artist considers and articulates documentation/dissemination of work (if applicable). 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of goals, objectives, and outcomes.	11-12 pts
		Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of goals, objectives, and outcomes.	8-10 pts
		Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of goals, objectives, and outcomes.	5-7 pts
		Needs Work	Applicant provides limited evidence of goals, objectives, and outcomes.	3-4 pts
		Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of goals, objectives, and outcomes.	0-2 pts

Application Question 4

Community Benefit (30% weighting)

Artist demonstrates broad *community benefit with a practice or work that contributes to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the community.*

Application Question	Review Criteria Community Benefit	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
<p>4 Audience (300 word maximum):</p> <p>Who is your community/intended audience?</p> <p>If you are applying to fund an artist need that is not public facing, please address how having that need met/funded will affect your community contribution as an artist.</p> <p>When responding to this question, feel free to share how your work impacts people beyond the arts and culture community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended audience is clearly defined. • Direct (public project) or indirect (artist need) contributions to the community are articulated. • Understanding of community/market is indicated. 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of a clear intended audience.	9-10 pts
		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
		Needs Work	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

Application Question 5

Application Question	Review Criteria Community Benefit	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
<p>5 <i>DEIA (300 word maximum):</i></p> <p>How do you and/or your practice/work contribute to diversity, equity, inclusion and/or accessibility of neighborhoods, communities, or the entire St. Louis region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates and presents art that represents the telling of stories of diverse populations (if applicable). • Provides equitable opportunities to create and participate (if applicable). • Activities/artwork, and the locations where they are provided, are intentionally accessible to all people (if applicable). 	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
		Needs Work	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 diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.	0-2 pts

Application Question 6

Application Question		Review Criteria	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
6	<p>Community Engagement (300 word maximum):</p> <p>How is the work relevant to the selected community or location?</p> <p>Do you have community partners in this work, official or unofficial? Who are they?</p> <p>In what ways do these partners inform your work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts in place to develop meaningful collaborations with diverse groups to expand artistic practice (if applicable). • Addresses intersection between artistic intention and community concerns/interests. • Demonstrates community participation/connection (if applicable). • Specifies community partnerships that increase engagement (if applicable). 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of community engagement.	9-10 pts
			Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of community engagement.	7-8 pts
			Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of community engagement.	5-6 pts
			Needs Work	Applicant provides limited evidence of community engagement.	3-4 pts
			Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of community engagement.	0-2 pts

Application Question 7

Capacity & Sustainability (30% weighting)

An artist that *intentionally* plans for *artistic/practice capacity & sustainability*.

Application Question	Review Criteria Capacity & Sustainability	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
7 Budget & Budget Narrative (300 word maximum): Upload your project/need budget and provide a budget narrative explaining expenses and revenues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a realistic and balanced budget and clear budget narrative. • Budget is appropriate for the scope of what artist proposes. • Budget indicates diverse revenue streams (if applicable). • Has a contingency plan to support project completion. 	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
		Needs Work	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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload: Budget 				

Application Question 8

Application Question		Review Criteria Capacity & Sustainability	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
8	Artist Capacity (300 word maximum): Describe your ability to carry out the proposed project or your regular practice based on factors such as resources involved/outlined and your qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and ongoing commitment to planning, goal setting, and promotions (if applicable). • Describes a connection to the artist's earlier work or represents an intentional shift from what the artist has done in the past as indicated by artist statement and CV or resume. 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of capacity to complete the work.	9-10 pts
			Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of the capacity to complete the work.	7-8 pts
			Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of the capacity to complete the work.	5-6 pts
			Needs Work	Applicant provides limited evidence of the capacity to complete the work.	3-4 pts
			Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of the capacity to complete the work.	0-2 pts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload: CV or resume 					

Application Question 9

Application Question		Review Criteria Capacity & Sustainability	Rating	Rating Definition	Point Range
9	Sustainability (300 word maximum): Please provide a project/practice growth & development statement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement complements what is known about the project/need and the information provided in the budget. • Applicant describes how RAC grant will be a catalyst for artistic and/or professional growth. 	Exemplary	Applicant provides overwhelming evidence of a plan to sustain their work/practice.	9-10 pts
			Strong	Applicant provides strong evidence of a plan to sustain their work/practice.	7-8 pts
			Good	Applicant provides sufficient evidence of a plan to sustain their work/practice.	5-6 pts
			Needs Work	Applicant provides limited evidence of a plan to sustain their work/practice.	3-4 pts
			Weak	Applicant provides little to no evidence of a plan to sustain their work/practice.	0-2 pts



RATING TRANSPARENCY

Once the application closes on March 27, 2023, grant reviewers will read and rate all applications assigned to them within the GMS portal. 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 review meeting. The application review process will take place during a 90-minute virtual meeting.

Reviewers will provide a second rating for the applications. All application ratings will be averaged, ranked highest to lowest, and then presented to the reviewers for a final decision. 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 published on the website so that applicants may listen to their application’s review.

NOTIFICATION

If awarded a grant, applicants will be notified via the Blackbaud GMS 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 Artist Support 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. There are instructions on the RAC website that will help guide grantees through this process. Once the account is created with the proper banking information, RAC will process the award payment.

The Artist Support 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 GMS platform.

Each grantee is required to submit a final report on or before July 1, 2024. Should a grantee not complete the reporting requirement, they will be ineligible to apply for RAC grants in the future.

ARTIST SUPPORT GRANT SCHEDULE 2023-2024

Application Workshops*	January 26 – February 14
Application Opens in GMS Platform	Week of February 13
Pre-application Deadline	Monday, February 20
Pre-application Feedback Delivered	Monday, February 27 – Friday, March 17
Final Application Deadline	Monday, March 27
RAC Staff Internal Review	Tuesday, March 27 – Friday, April 7
Reviewers Receive Applications	Monday, April 10 – Friday, April 14
Reviewer Ratings Due	Monday, May 8
RAC Staff Rating Analysis	Monday, May 8 – Friday, May 12
Panel Meetings	Monday, May 15 – Friday, May 26
Staff Finalizes Ratings	Tuesday, May 30
Application Ratings Shared with Applicants	Wednesday, May 31
Commission Vote on Grant Awards	Thursday, June 8
Grant Award Announcements & Notification	Thursday, June 8 – Friday, June 9
Terms and Conditions Agreement Distributed and Signed	Monday, June 12 – Wednesday, July 12, 2023
Direct Deposit Payment Made & Final Report Form Available	Monday, July 17 – Wednesday, July 19, 2023
Grant Programming Timeframe	July 1, 2023- June 31, 2024

*The virtual workshops will be recorded and available on the RAC website. Please check website for workshop topics and dates.

WHO TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS ABOUT GRANT APPLICATION OR REVIEW PROCESS

Chloe Smith
 Grants & Programs Manager
chloe@racstl.org

QUESTIONS ABOUT BLACKBAUD GRANTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Leigh Winter
 Grants Operations Assistant
leigh@racstl.org