2019/20 Program Support Application Writing Workshop

On-site Session: Tuesday, January 08, 2019
On-site Session: Wednesday, January 09, 2019
Online Session: Monday, January 14, 2019
On-site Session: Thursday, January 24, 2019
Regional Arts Commission (RAC)

The Regional Arts Commission (RAC) is at the forefront of efforts to transform St. Louis into a more vibrant, creative and economically thriving community by elevating the vitality, value and visibility of the arts.

- RAC provides financial support for both non-profit organizations and individual artists in St. Louis City and County.

- Since 1985, RAC has awarded more than 7,000 grants totaling more than $100 million to help strengthen arts and culture within the region.
Grant Schedule – Key Dates

Optional Advance Review Deadline
Thursday, January 17, 2019

Final Application Deadline
Thursday, February 07, 2019

Program Support Panel Meetings
Late March and early April

Appeals Process
Due within 1 week after receiving panel comments

Full Commission Vote on Awards
Thursday, May 09, 2019

Award Announcements
Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Grant Cycle Starts
Monday, July 01, 2019
What’s New in 19/20:

- **Grant Tier Clarifications**
  - If an applicant has received a RAC grant in the past, but has not met the required program expenses or income to be eligible in the grant tier in which they were awarded, RAC reserves the right to restrict which grant tier an applicant can apply for in future grant applications.

- **“Community Arts Programs”**
  - “Arts Based Community Development” has been rebranded as “Community Arts Programs”
Program Support

Purpose:

To support a one-time arts and culture project or an ongoing program that broadens and deepens participation and increases access to the arts.

To assist in the application review process, programs are divided into three categories and four tiers.
Basic Eligibility for Program Support

- Non-profit in Missouri and federal 501(c)3 status
- Art program or service must occur in St. Louis City or St. Louis County
- May apply for only one program and that program’s primary purpose must be the creation or utilization of art.
Program Support Restrictions

- An organization may apply for only one Program Support grant per grant cycle.
- A first-time applicant is eligible to apply only at the $3,000 and $5,000 Grant Tier in Program Support.
- Educational institutions, including schools, child care centers, colleges, and universities are ineligible to apply.
- Other Restrictions Apply – See Grants Information Guide
- Note – While the RAC staff does review all pre-applications for eligibility, it is not guaranteed during the full-application as applications may still become ineligible for review.
Fiscal Sponsorship

▪ New and Emerging Arts Organizations can apply with a Fiscal Sponsor
▪ Able to apply in the $5,000 and $3,000 grant tiers
▪ Fiscal Sponsor must:
  ▪ Be a 501 (c)3 tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service
  ▪ Have a strong history of arts programming or
  ▪ Have a fiscal sponsorship-based mission
▪ New or Emerging Arts Organization has not received more than two previous RAC grants under a fiscal sponsorship agreement.
Resource:

**Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts**

- St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts (VLAA) supports the creative community by providing free legal and accounting assistance and a wide variety of affordable educational programs.
- Financial Clinic – Monday, January 28 at 4:30 p.m.

Sue Greenberg  
314-863-6930  
vlaa@stlrac.org
Categories – Type of Program

Art and Culture Programs:

- Performances, concerts, exhibitions, readings, arts education, and other similar programs.

Cultural Festivals, Parades and Special Events:

- Supports St. Louis’ economic vitality and increase the regions visibility and desirability as a destination for out of town visitors.

Community Arts Programs:

- Arts as a tool for social change and civic engagement.
Tiers – Funding Methodology

- Tiered matching grant awards based on project costs and rating;
- Four funding levels: $15K; $10K; $5K and $3K
Four Point Rating System

- **4** - Model Organization (4 / 4-)
- **3** - Strong Organization (3+ / 3 / 3 -)
- **2** - Fundable, Room for Growth (2+)
- **1** - Not Fundable (1 / 2 / 2-)
## Program Support Grant Tiers

### $15,000 Grants

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<th>Funding Increments:</th>
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#### Funding Increments:

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Application Review Process

▪ Applicants must first submit a pre-application that is reviewed by staff to confirm eligibility.
▪ Eligible applicants are invited to submit a full application. These applications are reviewed by a 5-person Citizen Review Panel which is comprised of:
  ▪ Members of the St. Louis arts community
  ▪ Members of the general St. Louis community
  ▪ RAC Commissioners
▪ Citizen Review Panel Meetings
  ▪ Panelists are trained in review criteria and rating process
  ▪ RAC staff will facilitate the panel discussion
  ▪ Round 1: Panel will give each organization an overall rating according to 3 criteria
  ▪ Round 2: Panel will discuss all application ratings as a whole and reach a consensus on the final ratings
  ▪ Comments grouped by 3 criteria will be recorded
Review Criteria

▪ Artistic Merit and Quality of Programs
▪ Community Benefit
▪ Organizational Capacity
Artistic Merit and Quality of Programs – 1 of 2

▪ Strong artistic vision and leadership

▪ Engages and compensates qualified and experienced artists

▪ Distinctive and unique programming that enriches cultural offerings and/or preserves cultural traditions in St. Louis
Artistic Merit and Quality of Programs – 2 of 2

▪ A loyal audience base that is reflected by attendance numbers, community support and ticket sales (if applicable)

▪ High quality program(s) demonstrated through support materials including artist bios, printed programs, marketing materials, reviews and coverage in local media (if applicable)

▪ Ongoing commitment to evaluation of past programming, setting goals and improving the quality of the program
Community Benefit

- Demonstrated commitment to community engagement and the use of community knowledge and relationships to make informed and relevant programming decisions

- Demonstrated and intentional efforts to attract and retain diverse audiences and increase access to the arts to under-served individuals or under-resourced neighborhoods

- Demonstrated efforts to contribute to the vibrancy, safety and economic vitality of neighborhoods, communities or the entire St. Louis region
Organizational Capacity

1 of 2

- Experienced administrative staff and/or volunteers to implement the project

- An engaged and diverse board of directors that contributes financially to the organization

- History of a successful arts and culture program(s) and a clear plan to implement the project

- Regular short and long-term planning for the program and organization (if appropriate)
Organizational Capacity

- A project budget that is realistic, appropriate to the scope of the project and that reflects a diversity of funding sources

- Implements appropriate marketing efforts for the program

- Effective management of past RAC grant(s)
Appeals Process

▪ After applicants receive their organization’s panel comments and final ratings, they have the right to appeal if they believe that an error was made during the review that adversely affected their final rating.

▪ RAC staff reviews and approves all requests for appeals which are submitted by the applicants in writing within two weeks after the panel meeting.

▪ Panelists will reconvene to discuss the appeal and determine if it has merit; a majority of panelists must vote in favor of approving a change to the final rating in order for it to be increased.

▪ Results of the meeting are shared with the applicants after the meeting.
What Makes a Strong Proposal?

- A clear and succinct description of programming and the planning process
- Addressing the review criteria directly in the narratives
- Do not make assumptions about the knowledge level of the panelists
- Strong and clear work samples and financial documentation
Common Mistakes

- **Program Overviews**
  - Lack of unifying theme and sounds like multiple programs
  - Unclear artistic component and lack of detail

- **Timeline**
  - TBD, but no explanation in narrative for when planning would be confirmed
  - Ineligible locations listed (outside St. Louis City or County)

- **Work Samples**
  - Exceeded limit, no description, incorrect format, doesn’t speak to quality of art, or not relevant to program, etc.

- **Incomplete Application Sections**
  - Narratives, Demographics, Audience Numbers, etc.

- **Incorrect Financial Attachments**
  - Budgets (not board approved or the correct fiscal year)
  - 2-Year Financials (not the recent most completed or correct statements)
Management of Awarded Grant

- Manage through the online system: grants.racstl.org
- Find important info and dates through the RAC website and Grants Guidebook
  - Signed Contract
  - ACH
  - Three Disbursements (three divided payments of the grant award)
    - RAC Arts and Culture Events Calendar ("Manage Your Grant" Tab)
    - Disbursement due dates are based on Program Timeline
    - Grant outcome reported in final disbursement no later than six weeks after program completion
Questions?