

METROPOLITAN



R E G I O N A L
A R T S C O U N C I L



*Arts Activities Support
and
Community Arts*

**Grant Guidelines and Application
July 2002 – June 2003**

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This information can be made available in the following alternative formats: Braille, large print, audio tape and computer disk. We also can help your group find a language interpreter to translate these guidelines. To accommodate your request, the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council will need at least 10 working days.



ABOUT THE METROPOLITAN REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL

Mission

The Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC) serves a diversity of organizations, arts projects and arts audiences in the seven-county metropolitan area through programs and services that provide all interested people, in their own and other communities in the region, with opportunities to engage in the process of creating art as well as opportunities to enjoy the artistic accomplishments of others.

Principles of Inclusion

The Metropolitan Regional Arts Council shall continue to exercise leadership in enhancing opportunities for participation in the arts by underserved constituencies. Programs and services that MRAC undertakes and projects that MRAC supports through grants must be inclusive in their participation process, their audience reach, or both.

Legislative Mandate

The Metropolitan Regional Arts Council is one of 11 regional arts councils designated by the State of Minnesota "to make final decisions on the use of legislative appropriations for local/regional arts development." MRAC is charged with assessing the needs of the seven-county metropolitan area encompassing Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties, and with planning and administering programs and services based on its assessment.

Funding

Funding for Metropolitan Regional Arts Council programs and services is provided through an appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature and a grant from The McKnight Foundation.

MRAC GRANT PROGRAMS

Arts Activities Support

Grants of up to \$8,500 for arts activities in all disciplines.

Community Arts

Grants of up to \$4,000 for arts activities in all disciplines. Recommended for smaller and newly formed groups, first-time initiatives and community-based arts projects.

Capital

Grants of up to \$8,000 for nonprofit arts groups to purchase equipment and related supplies and services, or to make capital improvements.

Organizational Development Project

Grants of up to \$8,000 for projects designed to strengthen the management or administration of nonprofit arts groups.

Management Consulting Fund

Funds of up to \$1,000 for small management consulting projects designed to strengthen the management or administration of nonprofit arts groups.

Management Training Fund

Funds of up to \$600 for staff and volunteers of nonprofit arts groups to attend management workshops, classes or seminars.

Emergency ADA Access Fund

Grants of up to \$600 for unforeseen project or program costs to facilitate access for persons with disabilities.

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PART I GUIDELINES

We Provide Technical Assistance

Do you:

- Need more information?
- Want help in preparing your application?
- Require this application in an alternative format?

Eligibility:

To determine whether or not your group or project is eligible for funding from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, see **Who/What Is Eligible** below. This information applies to both the Arts Activities Support and Community Arts grants programs.

For details of the Arts Activities Support programs, see page 5. For more information on Community Arts, see page 6.

All applicants:

You are encouraged to attend an MRAC grantwriting workshop and to call MRAC staff to discuss your project. Applicants who do so have been shown to improve the quality of their applications.

Past applicants:

Whether or not your project was funded, we urge you to talk with MRAC staff about your previous application and to review the panel discussion of it. This will help you address concerns raised by earlier review panels and improve your chances of getting a grant.

Call the MRAC staff at 651-645-0402. We're here to answer all your questions.

Who/What Is Eligible?

To ensure eligibility, ALL applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss proposal ideas with MRAC staff before beginning an MRAC application.

Who do these programs fund?

- Nonprofit arts groups with annualized operating expenses less than \$300,000.
- Informal and/or unincorporated arts-focused groups and one-time arts projects with expenses less than \$300,000.
- Nonprofit, non-arts organizations with annualized arts programming expenses less than \$300,000 may apply when the focused effort of the intended arts activity primarily targets under-served communities (See definition, page 8).
- Community education units with arts budgets of any size may apply for funding for projects that primarily target under-served communities.

For Community Arts: First-time applicants are *advised* to apply to this program. Non-arts groups that cannot isolate arts budgets *must apply* to this program. Groups receiving funding from Minnesota State Arts Board's (MSAB) Institutional Support Program *may not* apply to this program.

For Arts Activities Support: Non-arts groups must have a separate arts program with annualized operating expenses less than \$300,000 and must submit an actual income and expense statement for their arts program for the most recently completed fiscal year.

For both programs: Applicants who have received or are applying for project support from other State agencies (Minnesota State Arts Board, Minnesota Humanities Commission) for the same activity may not receive more than 50% of the cash cost of the project from the combination of MRAC and other State funds.

About tax-exempt status: Community Education units, religious organizations and organizations that are part of larger nonprofit institutions should call MRAC for a description of the required documentation. All eligible groups that are not tax-exempt must apply using a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization as a fiscal agent (see definition, page 8). For more information on finding and working with a fiscal agent, call MRAC staff. For-profit organizations may not apply for an MRAC grant using a nonprofit fiscal agent.

What do these programs fund?

- Single-discipline or multidiscipline arts projects of all forms.
- Projects of artist service organizations (e.g., workshops) for which groups of artists are the audience.

These grant programs *DO NOT* fund:

- Applicant groups and/or activities located outside the seven-county metro area.
- Past MRAC grant recipients with overdue final reports.
- For-profit organizations.
- Educational institutions or projects whose primary audience is students in a Pre-K–16 general education setting. (See “About Educational Institutions,” page 4.)
- Individual artists.
- Capital improvements or construction, purchase of capital equipment, purchase of real property or endowments.
- Costs for fundraising events.
- Activities that engage in political lobbying, serve the religious socialization of participants or discriminate against persons or groups.

About Educational Institutions and/or Projects in a Pre-K–16 Setting

- Educational institutions ARE NOT eligible for MRAC funding regardless of the project. This includes public, private, alternative and charter schools whose principal purpose is serving the general education needs of Pre-K–16 students.
- Projects that serve an audience of Pre-K – 16 students as part of school-related activities ARE NOT eligible for MRAC funding.
- Community education units ARE eligible to apply if the project clearly targets an under-served community (see definition, page 8).
- Schools may be used as venues if they serve as a community meeting place or performance space.

How many MRAC grants may a group have at one time?

The following policies cover concurrent grants in MRAC’s major grant programs.

- **Arts groups that do not receive funding from the Minnesota State Arts Board Institutional Support Program** may receive one Arts Activities Support OR Community Arts grant AND one Organizational Development Project OR Capital grant per MRAC fiscal year (July 1–June 30).
- **Arts groups that receive funding from the Minnesota State Arts Board Institutional Support Program** may receive only ONE Arts Activities Support, Organizational Development Project OR Capital grant per MRAC fiscal year.
- **Eligible non-arts organizations and community education units** may receive one Arts Activities Support AND one Community Arts grant OR two Community Arts grants per MRAC fiscal year IF 1) you can demonstrate a history of arts programming and 2) the projects clearly serve different underserved constituencies.
- **Groups that have an MRAC-funded project in process** and meet the policies above may apply for a subsequent grant in the same program if the first project and its final report are completed according to the terms of the grant agreement before MRAC’s published “earliest project start” date for the new project. For the earliest start dates for the Arts Activities Support grant program, see page 5. For the earliest start dates for the Community Arts grant program, see page 6.

ARTS ACTIVITIES SUPPORT

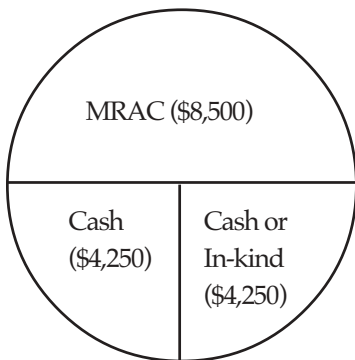
Program Description

The Arts Activities Support program offers grants of up to \$8,500 in project support for all arts disciplines. This grant can fund up to one-half of your total project costs.

Your request may include costs for personnel, postage, supplies, equipment, printing, travel and other activities necessary to carry out your project.

Program Requirements

- MRAC funds must be matched dollar for dollar. At least 50% of the match must be in cash. Cash sources may include general operating funds, past surpluses, other grants, and earned income or revenue you plan to raise specifically for this project. The remaining match may include cash and/or in-kind goods and services (see definition, page 8).



Example: With a total project budget of \$17,000, you may apply to the Arts Activities Support program for a grant of up to \$8,500 (one-half of project budget). You must then match the \$8,500 request with at least \$4,250 (50%) in cash and \$4,250 in cash and/or in-kind goods and services.

- Your group must have a board of directors or advisory committee that provides input on your project.

Deadlines

	<i>Application Deadline</i>	<i>Panel Review</i>	<i>Award Notification</i>	<i>Earliest Project Start Date *</i>
Round I	5 pm Aug. 12, 2002	Oct. 10 – 11	Oct. 16	Oct. 16
Round II	5 pm Mar. 17, 2003	May 15 – 16	May 21	May 21

* MRAC will not consider applications for projects that begin before these earliest project start dates (see definition, page 8).

COMMUNITY ARTS

Program Description

The Community Arts program is intended for community-based and volunteer groups; smaller, established arts groups; and newly formed groups or first-time initiatives.

Maximum grant size is \$4,000. This grant can fund up to one-half of your total project costs. Your request may include costs for personnel, postage, supplies, equipment, printing, travel and other activities necessary to carry out your project.

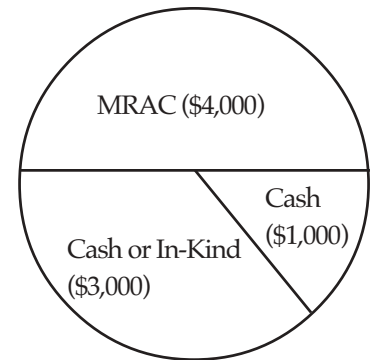
Each county has a block of funds designated for grants to groups residing within that county. In Washington County, MRAC has partnered with a local arts agency (see page 7). This agency partner has information about the Community Arts program, and they can serve as a resource and drop-off point for your grant application.

Program Requirements

- MRAC funds must be matched dollar for dollar. At least 25% of the match must be in cash. Cash sources may include general operating funds, past surpluses, other grants, and earned income or revenue you plan to raise specifically for this project. The remaining match may include cash and/or in-kind goods and services (see definition, page 8).

Example: With a total project budget of \$8,000, you may apply to the Community Arts program for a grant of up to \$4,000 (one-half of project budget). You must then match the \$4,000 request with at least \$1,000 (25%) in cash and \$3,000 in cash and/or in-kind goods and services.

- Your group must have a board of directors or advisory committee that provides input on your project.



Deadlines

	<i>Application Deadline</i>	<i>Panel Review</i>	<i>Award Notification</i>	<i>Earliest Project Start Date</i> *
Round I	5 pm Sept. 30, 2002	Dec. 6, 7 & 14	Dec. 20	Dec. 20
Round II	5 pm Feb. 10, 2003	Apr. 4, 5 & 12	Apr. 16	Apr. 16

* MRAC will not consider applications for projects that begin before these earliest project start dates (see definition, page 8).

Local Arts Agency Partners

If you have questions about the Community Arts program, call MRAC or the River Valley Arts Council. For help in preparing your application, call the MRAC staff.

Block Grant Administration for Washington County:

River Valley Arts Council
P.O. Box 22
Stillwater, MN 55082 / 651-439-1465
www.rvac.org

Block Grant Administration for Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Scott counties:

Metropolitan Regional Arts Council
2324 University Avenue West, Suite 114
St. Paul, MN 55114 / 651-645-0402
www.mrac.org

What Happens After You Apply?

- MRAC staff reviews all applications for eligibility. *Reminder:* Late and incomplete applications are ineligible.
- Eligible applications are reviewed at an open meeting by a peer review panel. All applicants will be notified of the meeting. We encourage you to observe the proceedings.
- The panel submits its recommendations to the MRAC Board of Directors for Arts Activities Support or your local arts agency partner's Board of Directors for Community Arts, which makes the final decisions on funding.
- Within 30 days of the panel review, you will receive a letter notifying you of the board's decision. Successful applicants receive a grant agreement to sign and return within the following 30 days.
- The board's funding decisions may be appealed solely on alleged procedural errors. There is no right of appeal based on the size of the grant awarded or on disagreements with the review panel's assessment of your application. Appellants must request an appeal in writing within 30 days of notification of the board decision. Call MRAC at 651-645-0402 for a copy of the appeal process.

Definitions

What does MRAC mean by under-served community?

Under-served is a term MRAC uses to encompass 1) those who traditionally have not had access to the arts for reasons of physical access, geography or economics, and 2) those who do not generally have the opportunity to see their lives, culture or experiences reflected through the arts. This includes, but is not limited to, diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, age and gender groups, persons with disabilities and groups located outside the core cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

What is a fiscal agent?

A *fiscal agent* is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that receives MRAC grant monies and manages the financial aspects of the project on behalf of a group that does not have tax-exempt status. Your fiscal agent must be based in Minnesota; it may be an arts or social services organization, school, city or government agency.

What does in-kind mean?

In-kind refers to non-cash donations of goods and services. On both Project Budget forms, under In-Kind Expenses, you may include the fair market value of donated goods and services given to you at reduced or no cost for which others would have to pay. Do not include donations that your group makes to itself, such as reuse of project materials already on hand or staff time in excess of salaried hours. Do not include the value of services that your group generally considers volunteer services, such as board members' time or the services of volunteer artists, ushers, ticket takers and others you usually do not pay. Do not include items that are always free of charge to people in your community, such as cable access equipment and community space. If you use In-kind contributions to make the required 100% MRAC grant match, MRAC may request verification of the value of the donations, such as a copy of the acknowledgement letter your group sent to the donor.

What determines a project's earliest start date?

MRAC defines *earliest project start date* as the point at which commitments are made that set the project in motion (e.g., rehearsals, contracts for and/or payment of administrative or artistic fees, public notification, acceptance of tuition or fees, ordering and/or paying for supplies or printed material). MRAC WILL NOT fund projects to which you have made a financial commitment BEFORE a grant is awarded. Call MRAC at 651-645-0402 to discuss your project's eligibility.

What is an ADA access plan?

ADA refers to the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. This federal law made access to cultural programs and services for persons with disabilities a civil right. In the spirit of that law, MRAC believes that the receipt of public money obligates its grant recipients to ensure that people with disabilities can fully participate in and enjoy arts activities. One approach to understanding the many ways a group can become more accessible is to develop an ADA access plan. Such a plan serves to assess the accessibility of an organization's programs, services and facilities and define strategies for improvement. Completing an ADA access plan will help you to address the criterion of Access in your grant application. MRAC has published an ADA access planning guide. Call 651-645-0402 to request a copy or download it from www.mrac.org.