

METROPOLITAN



REGIONAL
ARTS COUNCIL



Capital

Grants of up to \$10,000 for nonprofit arts groups to purchase equipment and related supplies and services, or to make capital improvements

Grant Guidelines and Application July 2009 – June 2010

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

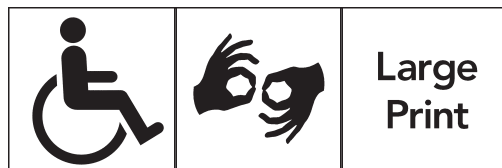
fax 651-523-6382

e-mail: mrac@mrac.org

website: www.mrac.org

MN Relay Service, dial 7-1-1 (or 1-800-627-3529)

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.



WHO MRAC SERVES

MRAC serves Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. We work in urban areas as well as greater metropolitan communities. We serve formal and informal groups with annual expenses less than \$300,000. Groups do not need to be classified as tax-exempt by the IRS in order to apply.

MRAC'S VISION FOR THE METRO AREA



MRAC'S MISSION

The Metropolitan Regional Arts Council promotes incorporation of the arts into the daily lives of all communities by providing leadership, advocacy, grants and services.

MRAC'S FUNDING SOURCES

As one of 11 regional arts councils in Minnesota, MRAC is largely funded by an appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature. MRAC also receives a generous grant from The McKnight Foundation.

WE'D LIKE TO GET TO KNOW YOU!

Call us - 651-645-0402

Stop by the office

2324 University Avenue West, Suite 114
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55114

E-mail us - mrac@mrac.org

Check out our website - www.mrac.org

Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter at our website www.mrac.org

WHAT MRAC OFFERS YOU

Grant programs

Community Arts—up to \$5,000 for arts activities in all disciplines. Recommended for smaller arts groups; newly formed groups; community-based and volunteer groups; or first-time initiatives.

Arts Activities Support—up to \$10,000 for arts activities in all disciplines.

Capital—up to \$10,000 to purchase equipment and related supplies and services, or to make capital improvements.

Organizational Development Project—up to \$10,000 for projects that strengthen the management or administration of nonprofit arts groups.

Creative Intersections—up to \$10,000 to support innovative and effective partnerships that integrate arts and culture into plans for community development and enrichment.

Management Consulting Fund—up to \$1,500 for small management consulting projects designed to strengthen the management or administration of arts groups.

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

Emergency ADA Access Fund—up to \$600 for unforeseen project or program costs to facilitate access for persons with disabilities.

Training, workshops and services

MRAC'S grant application workshops help applicants learn how to write a successful MRAC grant.

MRAC'S training programs and workshops provide opportunities to enhance management skills. All activities are detailed on our website.

MRAC'S website also provides links to resources of interest to MRAC constituents including PDF versions of most MRAC publications.

Advocacy

MRAC is committed to giving voice to the needs of small and volunteer arts organizations throughout the metro area.

METROPOLITAN



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

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PART I GUIDELINES

Capital Program Description

The Capital grant program provides funds of up to \$10,000 to purchase equipment and related supplies and services, or to make capital improvements. Such activities must 1) advance the mission of your group and 2) have the potential for significant or long-term impact.

Capital grants may be used for projects such as those listed below. This list is intended to help you understand the grant program's purpose; it is not a complete list of eligible projects.

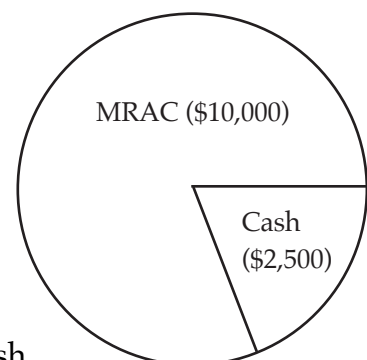
- Purchase of equipment such as musical instruments, lighting board or sound equipment**
- Purchase of computer hardware and software**
- Purchase and installation of telephone system**
- Facility improvements to increase accessibility**
- Facility improvements to performance or office space**

Capital grant applications must show evidence that thorough planning has taken place. For example, in the narrative portion of the application, you will be asked to 1) clearly define your project and its goals, 2) identify specific equipment to be purchased or capital improvements to be made, and 3) provide the names of at least three vendors from which you have obtained competitive estimates or bids.

Program Requirements

- Your total project budget must be \$50,000 or less. Your request may not be part of a larger capital campaign. Under special circumstances, a project with a budget exceeding \$50,000 may be considered; however, groups must call MRAC staff at 651-645-0402 and receive written approval before applying.
- For every four MRAC dollars requested, you must match or raise one dollar from a source other than MRAC. Match sources may include general operating funds, past surpluses, other grants, and earned income or revenue you plan to raise specifically for this project.

Example: with a total project budget of \$12,500, you may apply for a Capital grant of up to \$10,000. You must then match the \$10,000 request with \$2,500 from other cash sources.



- In-kind donations of any kind may not be used to supply the match (see definition, page 6).
- If you request funds for more than one item, all items must be clearly related. Example: lighting board, installation costs and lighting instruments.

- Personnel expenses may include only 1) services directly related to the equipment, such as installation, maintenance, repairs and “in-house” training provided by a consultant or salesperson, or 2) contractor fees and labor associated with capital improvements.
- You may not request funds for administration or planning and management of the project, or for training classes, workshops or seminars. Call MRAC staff at 651-645-0402 if you have any questions about eligible expenses.

Capital Deadlines

	<i>Application Deadline*</i>	<i>Panel Review</i>	<i>Award Notification</i>	<i>Earliest Project Start Date</i>
Fiscal Year 2009-2010	5 P.M. Nov. 9, 2009	Jan. 22, 2010	Jan. 27, 2010	Jan. 27, 2010

* This is also the application deadline for the Organizational Development grant program. Eligible groups may apply to only one program (Capital or Organizational Development) on this deadline.

Eligibility

To ensure eligibility, all applicants are strongly encouraged to read these guidelines thoroughly and attend an application workshop.

Who does this program fund?

- Incorporated nonprofit arts groups located in the seven-county metropolitan area with annualized operating expenses less than \$300,000 and at least a two-year history of programs/services.

About nonprofit and tax-exempt status: groups must be incorporated as a nonprofit in the State of Minnesota to be eligible for this program. If you are incorporated as a nonprofit but do not have IRS tax-exempt status, you must apply using a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization as a fiscal sponsor (see definition, page 6). For-profit organizations may not apply for an MRAC grant using a nonprofit fiscal sponsor.

- Nonprofit non-arts organizations with annualized arts programming expenses less than \$300,000 may be eligible if:
 - They have independent and sustained arts programs (see definition, page 6), and
 - They can demonstrate clearly that the sustained arts program is specifically and primarily intended to serve an under-served community (see definition, page 6).

To determine eligibility, all non-arts organizations must call MRAC staff for written approval before applying.

Who does this program NOT fund?

- Applicant groups located outside the seven-county metro area.
- For-profit organizations.
- Educational institutions or projects that take place as part of Pre-K–16 general education activities. This includes public, private, alternative, charter and home schools.
- Community education units may not apply for management related grants or capital funds for their arts program. However, a community ed. may serve as fiscal sponsor for an “independent and sustained” community arts group. Such groups may be eligible to apply for funds if they meet all other eligibility requirements defined on page 3 for “nonprofit, non-arts organizations with annualized arts programming expenses less than \$300,000...”
- Past MRAC grant recipients who have not fulfilled final reporting requirements.

What does this program NOT fund?

- Production or presentation of arts events.
- Purchase of land or buildings, endowments, debt reduction or cash reserves.
- Costs for fundraising events.
- Activities that engage in political lobbying, serve the religious socialization of participants or discriminate against persons or groups.
- Requests for capital goods already funded by MRAC in a previous round, without significant justification of new need.

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 and eligible non-arts organizations** may receive one (1) Creative Intersections grant AND one (1) Arts Activities Support or Community Arts grant AND one (1) Organizational Development or Capital grant every MRAC fiscal year.
- **Groups may have only one Organizational Development or Capital grant in process at any given time.** Groups that have one of these grants in process, if otherwise eligible, may apply for another Organizational Development or Capital grant 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 project start date, see page 3.

Before You Apply – Technical Assistance

Staff Assistance

MRAC has one program director for Capital who can answer application questions and review applications prior to submission. Gwen Cannon, gwen@mrac.org or 651-523-6389.

Application Workshops

MRAC offers free application workshops that address the process and criteria specific to each grant program. You are encouraged to attend a workshop to learn about changes in programs, get questions answered and discuss project ideas with program directors and other arts colleagues.

Grant Library

Because MRAC re-grants public funds, submitted applications are public information. MRAC maintains a library of these grant applications and recorded panel discussions. Applicants are encouraged to review grant applications and panel discussions to enhance their understanding of the process and improve their applications. If you call ahead, your program director can identify the successful applications most relevant to your project.

Website

Visit www.mrac.org to find additional information about MRAC programs, workshops and events, and to register for application workshops.

What Happens After You Apply

- MRAC staff reviews all applications for eligibility. Errors may reduce the size of your award or make the application ineligible. All late and incomplete applications are ineligible.
- A peer review panel reviews all eligible applications. In the spirit of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, the panel meeting is open to the public. Applicants are encouraged to attend to enhance their understanding of the application review process and to hear the panelists' comments directly. All applicants will be notified of the meeting.
- The panel submits its recommendations to the MRAC board of directors, which makes the final decisions on funding.
- Within 30 days of the panel review, applicants receive a letter notifying them of the board's decision. A list of funded applications is also posted on the MRAC website. If you want more insight on your grant's review, you may call your program director for feedback.
- 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 an 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 Minneapolis and St. Paul city limits.

What is a fiscal sponsor?

A *fiscal sponsor* 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 sponsor 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 for which your group would otherwise have to pay. In-kind goods and services may not be included in the budget for your Capital grant application.

What determines a project's start date?

MRAC defines *earliest project start date* as the point at which commitments are made that set the project in motion (e.g. payment of professional fees, completion of contracts, equipment purchases). MRAC will not fund projects to which you have made a financial commitment before the published earliest project start date. Please call MRAC if you are unclear about whether MRAC would consider that your project has started.

What is an ADA access plan?

ADA refers to the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. This federal law makes 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.

What is MRAC's definition of an "independent and sustained arts program" in a non-arts, nonprofit organization?

An independent and sustained arts program has 1) a separate advisory board overseeing the arts programming, 2) a separate arts program Income and Expenses Statement and 3) ongoing programming with at least a two-year history of arts activities.