

METROPOLITAN



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



## *Creative Intersections*

*“Building Community Through the Arts”*

**Grants of up to \$10,000 to support innovative partnerships that integrate arts and culture into plans for community development and enrichment.**

### **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

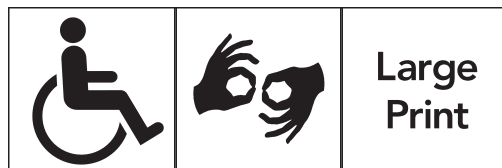
fax 651-523-6382

e-mail: [mrac@mrac.org](mailto:mrac@mrac.org)

website: [www.mrac.org](http://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](mailto:mrac@mrac.org)

Check out our website - [www.mrac.org](http://www.mrac.org)

Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter at our website [www.mrac.org](http://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.

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# PART I GUIDELINES

## Creative Intersections Overview and Description

The Creative Intersections Program provides grants of up to \$10,000 to support innovative and effective partnerships that integrate arts and culture into plans for community development and enrichment. This program is designed for organizations that engage the arts as an important element in building and strengthening community.

### Overview

The Metropolitan Regional Arts Council's vision is a region in which

- Artists, arts organizations, and arts activities thrive;
- Public value of the arts is understood and acted upon by community members, leaders, and policy makers;
- Art is integrated into the social fabric and identity of every community.

To accomplish this vision, the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC) works to make the arts an integral part of each community by cultivating the arts at the grassroots level and by extending the benefits of the arts to residents throughout our region. MRAC recognizes the benefit of dynamic relationships among artists, arts organizations, and their communities in achieving this vision. This grant program is designed to serve as a catalyst for innovative community partnerships that encourage local communities to invest in arts and culture as one of the cornerstones of community building and vitality.

**Grants are awarded for collaborative projects that connect the arts to people and communities in meaningful ways and that demonstrate the public value of the arts to individuals and civic life. MRAC's goal is that funded organizations will emerge from their projects with a strengthened presence in their community, that they will be better positioned to sustain their role within their community, and that the role of the arts in strengthening the community is more broadly understood and recognized.**

# What are MRAC's Goals for this Program?

The Creative Intersections program aims to

- encourage innovation, excellence, and diversity of experiences in community artistic and cultural development,
- strengthen the arts and its sustainability,
- increase participation in the arts in the community by artists/creators, audiences, and local supporters of the arts, and extend the reach of the arts to under-served populations,
- cultivate local partnerships by encouraging the commitment of local services and financial resources from the “triad” of community development sectors (public, private nonprofit, and commercial business). (See diagram, page 4.)

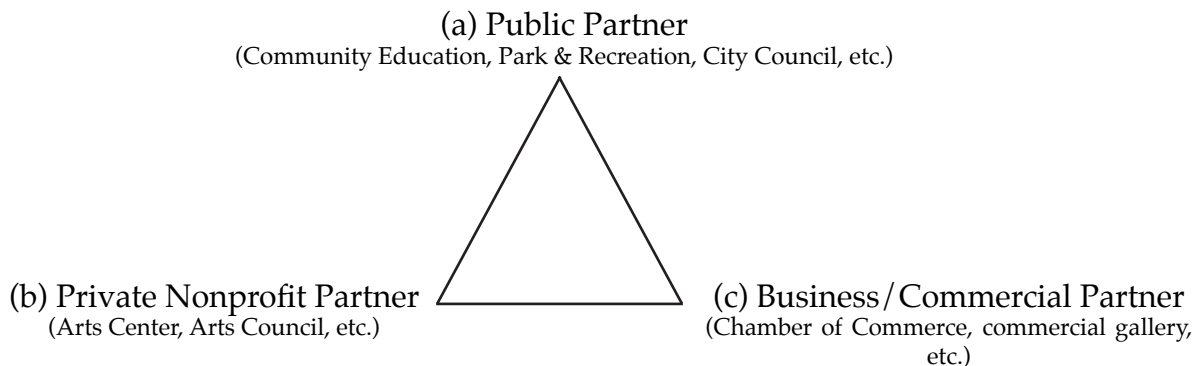
## Program Description

The Creative Intersections grant provides up to \$10,000 to support the connections between the arts and local communities. *The parameters of the grant are purposefully broad. They include any “good idea” that furthers the stated program goals. 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.*

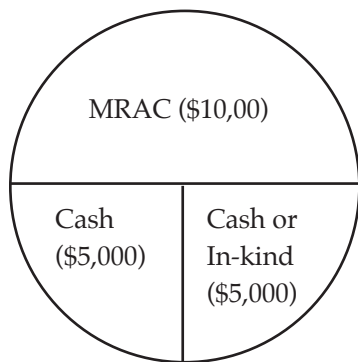
- **Artistic Program Development**— initiatives of high artistic quality that demonstrate innovation, community engagement, and cross-sector collaboration.
- **Community Development**— initiatives that use the arts to address a challenge or leverage an opportunity within a community.
- **Audience Development**—initiatives that increase participation in the local arts by artists/creators, audiences, and supporters, and that broaden community participation in the civic life of the community through the arts and culture.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration Development**—initiatives that enhance and strengthen the arts and cultural intersections with all sectors within a community.

# Program Requirements

1. All applicant organizations must demonstrate that there are partners from within the three economic sectors of their community, one of which must be a public or nonprofit arts partner: (a) public, (b) private nonprofit, and (c) business or commercial. The applicant organization must identify at least one key partner within each of the other two sectors and include a letter of involvement from each of the two named partners. For example, if the applicant is the nonprofit arts center (b), they could develop partnerships with their city council (a), and a local commercial gallery (c).



2. The project must take place within the seven-county metropolitan area/ community defined by the application; use local assets, arts and culture; include strategies that engage local resources; and benefit that local community.
3. The project must fall outside of the general operations of the group. This program is not intended to fund the usual ongoing activities of a single organization.
4. All activities funded by the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council must be accessible to persons with disabilities.
5. 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.



Example: with a total project budget of \$20,000, you may apply to the Creative Intersections program for a grant of up to \$10,000 (one-half of project budget). You must then match the \$10,000 request with at least \$5,000 (50%) in cash and \$5,000 in cash and/or in-kind goods and services.

6. Projects engaging a consultant must identify the consultant. Please see page 8 for guidelines to help you prepare for and develop a project involving a consultant.

*Matching funds* may include funds secured through project partners, 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. It is important that all applicants demonstrate community fund-raising activity and seek a broad base of financial support.

*About matching funds:* if you have received or are applying for project support from other Minnesota State funding sources for the same activity, you may not receive more than 50% of the cash cost of the project from the combination of MRAC and other State funds.

*About in-kind:* if you are using donated goods and services, list their dollar value on the appropriate line in the in-kind column on Project Budget/Expense, page 21. If the in-kind donations are necessary to make the required MRAC grant match, you must include explanatory notes that detail how you arrived at the values. For further explanation of in-kind, see definition, page 10.

*About earned income:* provide detail about how this money will be earned in the space provided on Project Budget/Income, page 23. *Example:* if your project is a public performance, note the anticipated number of tickets to be sold, purchase price per ticket and total income projected.

## Creative Intersections Deadlines

	<i>Application Deadline</i>	<i>Panel Review</i>	<i>Award Notification</i>	<i>Earliest Project Start Date</i>
Cycle I	5 P.M. October 5, 2009	Nov. 20, 2009	Nov. 25, 2009	Nov. 25, 2009
Cycle II	5 P.M. April 5, 2010	May 21, 2010	May 26, 2010	May 26, 2010

# Eligibility Rules

## Who does this program fund?

This program funds arts groups and non-arts groups that meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Arts groups incorporated as nonprofits in the State of Minnesota, located in the seven-county metropolitan area with annualized operating expenses less than \$300,000 and at least a one-year history.
2. Nonprofit, non-arts organizations with annualized arts programming expenses less than \$300,000 and at least a one-year history of arts programming, if they can demonstrate clearly that the project is specifically and primarily intended to serve an under-served community (see definition, page 9). Examples might be a local community development organization, a park and recreation arts department, a community education-managed arts center, etc. To determine eligibility, all non-arts organizations must call MRAC staff to verify eligibility.
3. Groups that have a board of directors or advisory committee that is empowered to form policies and be responsible for the governance / oversight of the organization, its programs, and finances.

## Who does this program NOT fund?

1. Groups that have a Creative Intersections grant in process or another MRAC grant-funded project for the same purpose.
2. Groups located outside the seven-county metropolitan area.
3. Past MRAC grant recipients who have not fulfilled final reporting requirements.
4. For-profit organizations.
5. 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.

## What does this program NOT fund?

1. Projects that further the goals or missions of the sponsoring organizations, but have little effect on creating connections between art, community building, and civic engagement for the purpose of enhancing community vitality.
2. Projects located outside of the applicant's defined local community.
3. Projects that are part of a single organization's usual, ongoing activities.
4. Projects of limited duration that are not directly tied to long-term momentum and community development goals.
5. Current staff for work considered within the scope of the group's usual and customary work.
6. Portions of significantly larger projects funded through other sources.
7. Purchase of land or buildings, facility development, endowments, debt reduction or cash reserves.
8. Costs of fundraising events.
9. Capital purchases or purchase of artwork.

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

- **Arts groups and eligible non-arts groups** 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 only have one Creative Intersections grant in process at any given time.** Groups that have a Creative Intersections grant in process may apply for a subsequent project support grant if the first project and its final report are completed according to the terms of the grant agreement before MRAC's "earliest project start" date for the new project. For the earliest project start dates, see page 5.

# Finding, Selecting and Working with Consultants

Projects such as a cultural plan may include the use of a consultant. These guidelines are offered to help you prepare for and carry out a project that might involve a consultant.

## Finding a consultant

- To clearly define your consulting needs, write a brief description of 1) the situation or problem as you currently see it; 2) your Creative Intersections proposal's focus; and 3) general requirements for the consultant, such as years of experience or areas of expertise.
- Collect the names of potential consultants from others – colleagues from other arts or nonprofit groups, MRAC and your board members. You can also look at the resumes of consultants who have worked on past MRAC-funded projects.
- Select two or three consultants who best fit your situation, grant focus and requirements.

## Selecting a consultant

- Call your selected candidates. To determine their interest and availability, briefly describe your group, situation, proposed project focus and timeline. Set up a short interview with each candidate to further discuss your project. Ask the consultant to send you a resume/biography and client list. (If your candidate is not available, ask for names of other consultants who might fit your needs.)
- Prepare for your consultant interviews. The Creative Intersections project leader from your group should prepare questions in advance and attend each interview.
- Check references for your final candidate(s).
- Make your selection. Consider not only experience, expertise and fee but also your ability to work well together.
- Sign a contract before you begin work. Include in the contract your grant application/work plan, payment schedule, evaluation checkpoints and the conditions under which you may cancel the contract.

## Maintaining a good working relationship

- Create a well-designed project with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and outcomes.
- Plan on working many more hours than the consultant. To be effective, the consultant will need time – your time – to learn about your group and its issues. At least initially, the consultant is likely to increase your workload.
- Keep your expectations of yourself and the consultant realistic. Your consultant is unlikely to solve all of your group's problems.
- Whenever possible, ask the consultant to act as a coach or trainer so you learn by doing.

# Before You Apply – Technical Assistance

Staff is available to assist you as you are developing your application. You may consult with staff regarding the scope of your project, for technical assistance in the writing of your application, and for review of draft proposals. Please contact:

Gwen Cannon  
gwen@mrac.org  
651.523.6389

## 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.

## 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 the 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. Your project budget 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. The following examples are ineligible in-kind:

- Donations that your group makes to itself, such as reuse of project materials already on hand or personnel time/value in excess of salaried hours or fees agreed upon by independent contractors.
- 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.
- 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 acknowledgment letter your group sent to the donor.

## **What determines a project's earliest start date?**

MRAC does not fund projects that are already under way. MRAC defines a project's start date as the point at which financial or other commitments are made that set the project in motion (e.g. rehearsals begin, contracts are signed, marketing materials are printed). Because MRAC is a distributor of a legislative appropriation, and requires that all printed materials acknowledge the legislature as a funding source, grantees must wait until award notification before printing publicity materials. 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](http://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.