

METROPOLITAN



REGIONAL
ARTS COUNCIL

Management Consulting Fund

Funds of up to \$1,500 for small management consulting projects designed to strengthen the management or administration of nonprofit arts groups

Grant Guidelines and Application July 2010 – June 2011

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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 funded by an appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature, and through the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

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.

Arts Learning—up to \$10,000 for arts learning 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

Management Consulting Fund Program Description

The Management Consulting Fund provides grants of up to \$1,500 to support consulting fees of a consultant to assist in small projects designed to strengthen the management or administration of the group. Such management consulting projects must 1) advance the mission of the group, and 2) have the potential for significant or long-term impact.

Management Consulting Fund grants may be used to conduct an assessment, resolve an issue or create and/or implement a plan in areas 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. Remember, it is a small grant for a small project, and should be "doable" in scope with limited resources.

Board governance (bylaws, revisions, recruitment plan, board development plan)

Organizational strategy development (prioritizing organizational development issues at a facilitated retreat)

Resource development (shaping an individual donor campaign, developing a fundraising team)

Volunteer management (developing a volunteer services manual or volunteer resources plan)

Audience development (shaping a communications plan, establishing systems for mailings)

Preparation for a major Organizational Development Project (developing a planning process to undertake a major strategic planning or marketing project)

Access for persons with disabilities (completion of ADA plan)

Program Requirements

- Before submitting an application, your group must select the consultant and other personnel who will participate in the project.
- This grant program does not fund project expenses other than consultant fees.
- There is no cash match required for the Management Consulting Fund program.
- If you are intending to apply for an Organizational Development grant that is in any way related to the work to be completed with this Management Consulting Fund project, the final report for the MCF project must be submitted and approved before the Organizational Development Project grant deadline for which you are applying.

Deadlines

Applications are reviewed on a monthly basis. MRAC must receive your application by the last business day of the month. Grants will be considered in the following month. Projects may not begin until the month following this consideration period. For example, to be considered for a project beginning June 1, you must submit your application by 5 P.M. on or before the last regular business day of April.

Eligibility

Who does this program fund?

- Nonprofit arts groups with annualized operating expenses less than \$300,000.
- Informal and/or unincorporated arts-focused groups with expenses less than \$300,000. The applicant group must have an advisory committee that provides input on the project and oversight of the grant funds. Informal and/or unincorporated arts-focused groups must apply using a fiscal sponsor (see definition, page 6).
- 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).

All non-arts organizations must call MRAC staff to verify eligibility.

Who does this program NOT fund?

- Groups that have an MRAC-funded Management Consulting Fund project in process; groups that have an MRAC-funded Organizational Development project on a related topic in process.
- Activities that have been delivered in the same way and for the same purpose on an ongoing basis. Example: production and distribution of an annual brochure, annual marketing expenses, grantwriting or other ongoing staffing/general operations.
- Applicant groups located outside the seven-county metro area.
- Past MRAC grant recipients who have not fulfilled final reporting requirements.
- 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.
- Individual artists or groups incorporated as a for-profit entity may not apply using a fiscal sponsor.
- Community education units may not apply for management related grants or capital funds for their arts programs. However, a community ed. may serve as fiscal sponsor for its “independent and sustained” arts program (see definition, page 6)..

What does this program NOT fund?

- Project expenses other than consultant fees.
- Ongoing needs or activities that have been delivered in the same way and for the same purpose on an ongoing basis. Examples: production and distribution of an annual brochure; grantwriting.
- Current staff (paid or volunteer) for work considered within the scope of your group's usual and customary management.
- Continuation of organizational development work already underway.
- A portion of a significantly larger organizational development project funded through other sources.
- Portions of larger MRAC-funded projects.
- 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 continuation of projects previously funded by this program, without significant justification of new need.

How many MRAC Management Consulting Fund Grants and Organizational Development/Capital grants may a group have at one time?

The following policies cover concurrent grants in MRAC's Management Consulting Fund and Organizational Development and Capital programs.

- **Groups within the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul** may receive one (1) Management Consulting Fund grant AND one (1) Organizational Development or Capital grant every MRAC fiscal year. However, Management Consulting Fund and Organizational Development grants may not be in process simultaneously if they are related.
- **Groups within the greater metro (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Scott, Suburban Hennepin, Suburban Ramsey and Washington counties)** may receive two (2) Management Consulting Fund grants AND one (1) Organizational Development Project or Capital grant every MRAC fiscal year. However, Management Consulting Fund and Organizational Development grants may not be in process simultaneously if they are related.

Before You Apply – Technical Assistance

Staff

MRAC has one program director for Management Consulting Fund to answer questions about the grant process, discuss your project ideas with you, provide examples of the types of Management Consulting Fund activities that might be appropriate, and review a draft of your grant application. After these guidelines and the website, your program director is your best source of information. You are strongly encouraged to call Gwen Cannon to discuss your project.

Gwen Cannon, gwen@mrac.org or 651-523-6389.

Finding, Selecting and Working with Consultants

Use these guidelines to help you prepare for and carry out your Management Consulting Fund grant activities.

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 Management Consulting Fund grant 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, Springboard for the Arts, MRAC and your board members. You can also look at the resumes of consultants who have worked on past MRAC Organizational Development 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 Management Consulting Fund 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.

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.
- Eligible applications are reviewed by a panel of MRAC staff and board members convened monthly.
- 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 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.

* Individual artists or groups incorporated as a for-profit entity can not apply using a fiscal sponsor.

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.