

METROPOLITAN



REGIONAL
ARTS COUNCIL



Organizational Development

Grants of up to \$10,000 for projects designed to strengthen the management or administration of nonprofit arts groups

Grant Guidelines and Application July 2009 – June 2010

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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 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.

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PART I GUIDELINES

Organizational Development Program Description

The Organizational Development (OD) grant program provides grants of up to \$10,000 for projects designed to strengthen the management or administration of nonprofit arts groups. Such activities must 1) advance the mission of your group and 2) have the potential for significant or long-term impact. The intent of the program is to challenge the organization, infuse new thinking, or develop new systems to further the group's growth and development.

Organizational Development grants may be used to conduct an assessment 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.

Board Governance

Resource development (fundraising)

Financial planning or management

Communications/public relations

Access for people with disabilities

Strategic issues

Information systems

Volunteer management

Audience development/marketing

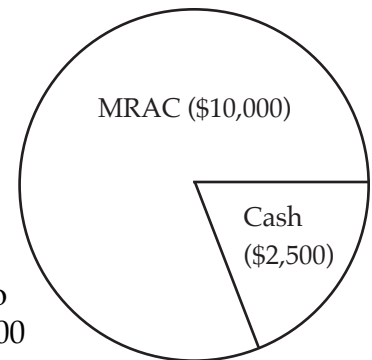
Community needs assessment

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

Program Requirements

- 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 an Organizational Development 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 7).
- If your grant application includes a request for funds to purchase equipment such as computer software, you must demonstrate that the equipment will directly support the overall goal of your Organizational Development project.
- Before submitting an Organizational Development grant application, your group must select the personnel who will participate in the project. You may request funds for employees and/or consultants whose skills and experience will help you carry out your project.

If your project personnel includes a new employee position, you are not required to select or hire the new employee before submitting your application. Instead, you should designate the personnel who will recruit, hire, supervise and train your proposed new employee.

Organizational Development 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. 21, 2010 | Jan. 27, 2010 | Jan. 27, 2010 |

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

Eligibility Rules

To ensure eligibility, all applicants are strongly encouraged to read these guidelines thoroughly and attend a grantwriting 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 7). 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 7), and
 - They can demonstrate clearly that the sustained arts program is specifically and primarily intended to serve an under-served community (see definition, page 7).

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

Whom 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 programs. 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?

- 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.
- 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 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.

Finding, Selecting and Working with Consultants

Use these guidelines to help you prepare for and carry out your Organizational Development 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 Organizational Development 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 Organizational Development 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

Organizational Development applications must show that thorough planning has taken place. Projects that are clearly focused on one significant organizational need tend to be more achievable, and hence, more likely to be funded. For example, in the narrative portion of the application, you will be asked to clearly define your project and its goals and to identify the personnel who will carry out the project.

Management Consulting Fund

You are strongly encouraged to apply for and complete a Management Consulting Fund grant application (see website) to help you plan the Organizational Development project.

If you plan to apply for an Organizational Development grant, your Management Consulting Fund final report must be submitted and approved before the Organizational Development grant deadline.

Staff Assistance

MRAC has one program director for Organizational Development 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 means donated 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 Organizational Development grant application.

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. 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.