

# metro regional arts council



2017 Twin Cities World Refugee Day Festival, captured by Kurt Moses

## Grant Guideline 2018-2019

### MANAGEMENT CONSULTING FUND

Consulting support up to \$1,750 for focused and targeted management projects

**Deadline:**

Last business day of the month

**Earliest Start Date:**

First day of the second month after the deadline

Review our guidelines, and contact MRAC with questions or for support. Translation available. MRAC will need 10 business days to obtain translation services.

**Program Director:**

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As one of 11 regional arts councils in Minnesota, MRAC is funded by an appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature and the Legacy Amendment Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. In November, 2008, Minnesotans passed the Clean Water, Land & Legacy amendment to the Minnesota Constitution, which created the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Proceeds from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund "may be spent only on arts, arts education and arts access and to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage."

# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Management Consulting Fund provides grants of up to \$1,750 to cover consulting fees related to small projects designed to strengthen the management or administration of the group. Projects should be small, and engage staff, board, and/or volunteers in a learning oriented process. Projects must advance the mission of the group AND have the potential for significant impact.

## FUND SCHEDULE

Proposals must be completed and submitted by the **last business day of the month at 11:59:59 p.m.** Projects may start on the first day of the second month after the deadline, i.e. if the deadline is January 31, then the project can start March 1.

### Examples of projects funded:

- Board governance (board development plan, board coaching, review of bylaws or policies)
- Organizational strategic pre-planning (prioritizing organizational issues and capacity)
- Access for persons with disabilities (completion of an ADA plan)
- Fund development (individual donor campaign, developing a fundraising plan)
- Pre-planning for an Organizational Development Project (pre-planning for a major project; strategic planning, leadership succession, website re-design, or a marketing plan)
- Evaluation and planning for website development
- Evaluation and advisement for technological needs (database, ticketing systems)
- Developing focus groups, audience surveys, or evaluation tools

# BEFORE APPLYING - RESOURCES

The Metropolitan Regional Arts Council is a hands-on grantmaker and program directors want to help you prepare a strong application that will be ready for panel review. To that end, we strongly encourage you to reach out to the program director before you submit an application, especially if you are a first time applicant in the grant program. Additional assistance is provided in the following ways:

- a. **Program Directors**- MRAC Program Directors are available for questions on eligibility and program intent, project idea development, grant attachment verification, and also offer draft support for your grant application.
- b. **Grant Application Workshops**- MRAC offers free grant application workshops 4-6 weeks before the deadline to learn about the grant program and to discuss project ideas with program directors. Check the online calendar for dates and times: [www.mrac.org/events](http://www.mrac.org/events)
- c. **Grant Library**- Because MRAC distributes public funds, submitted applications are public information. MRAC maintains a library at our offices where you can review all previously submitted applications and their ratings. You may also visit [www.mrac.org](http://www.mrac.org), click on "Grants" and follow links to "Recent Grant Awards" and

request 3 previously successful applications to be emailed as pdfs; contact your program director to have these sample grants sent.

- d. **Online Resources**- Visit [www.mrac.org/grants/grant-resources](http://www.mrac.org/grants/grant-resources) to access templates, technical how-tos for the grant interface, links to sites to find demographic information, and a glossary of terms.

## HOW TO APPLY AND ELIGIBILITY

MRAC grant applications **MUST** be completed and submitted online by **11:59:59 p.m.** Applications are submitted via the MRAC grant portal accessible from our webpage; at [www.mrac.org](http://www.mrac.org) select **'Manage My Organizational Grant.'** Groups should only use one grant record per organization, while there can be multiple users per organization. Contact MRAC with any difficulties accessing the online portal, but note that technical assistance is available only until 5:00 p.m. on the deadline day. We do not accept incomplete or late applications. Please read guidelines thoroughly to ensure eligibility.

- **All applicant groups AND art projects or activities **MUST** be located within the seven-county (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington) Twin Cities metro area.**

To ensure eligibility, all applicants are strongly encouraged to read these guidelines thoroughly. Please contact MRAC if you have any questions.

### **Applicant groups must be one of the following:**

- Federally tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization with annual operating expenses of less than \$400,000.
- Informal and/or unincorporated arts-focused groups with a fiscal sponsor and one-time arts projects with expenses of less than \$400,000. The applicant group must have a board of directors or advisory committee that provides input on the project and oversight of the grant funds.
- Non-arts nonprofits may be eligible for this grant program if their project is explicitly for the arts programming; please contact the program director before applying to assure you are eligible.

### **Applicant groups cannot be:**

- Groups that have an MRAC funded Organizational Development project already in process for the same management topic.
- Organizations registered with the MN Secretary of State as a profit-making Minnesota business (e.g. Business Corporation, Limited Liability Company, Limited Liability Partnership, MN Public Benefit Corporations, etc.). Single member LLCs and sole proprietorships may apply using a fiscal sponsor.
- Individual artists.

- Public, private, alternative, charter, or home schools (this includes school support organizations such as PTAs, PTOs, school foundations, etc.).
- Community education units may not apply for management related grants for their arts programs. However, a community education unit may serve as a fiscal sponsor.

**This program does NOT fund:**

- Project expenses other than consultant fees (examples: retreat costs, refreshments, software, fiscal sponsor fees, etc. must be paid from some other funding source).
- Continuation of an MRAC funded Organizational Development project already underway.
- Projects that have received or are seeking support from any other MRAC grant program.
- Requests in which any portion of activities are located outside the seven-county metro area.
- **Project Start Date:** MRAC does not fund projects that are already underway. MRAC defines a *project's start date* as the point at which the intended community is engaged, any items in the project budget have been expended, or financial and other commitments are made that set the project in motion (e.g. contracts are signed, materials printed or distributed, meetings have taken place, jobs have been posted).
- **Project End Date:** MRAC funds awarded in FY19 cannot have activities that extend beyond June 30, 2020.
- 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, grant writing, staffing/general operations.
- Requests for continuation of projects previously funded by this program, without significant justification of new need.
- Activities that engage in political lobbying, serve the religious socialization of participants, or discriminate against persons or groups.

**During each MRAC fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), groups may receive:**

- 1 Project Support grant (Arts Activities Support or Community Arts)
- 1 Arts Learning grant
- 1 Organizational Support grant (Organizational Development or Capital)
- 1 Management Consulting Fund grant for Metro organizations (2 for Suburban groups)
  - ◆ Groups may apply to any 2 of the 4 Project Support deadlines (Arts Activities Support or Community Arts) but may receive only one Project Support award per MRAC fiscal year.
  - ◆ Groups can apply to both Organizational Support deadlines (Organizational Development or Capital) but may only receive one Organizational Support award per MRAC fiscal year.
  - ◆ Eligible groups that have an MRAC-funded project in process may apply for a subsequent grant in the same program category if the first project is completed before MRAC's published earliest project start date for the new project.
  - ◆ Groups may not apply for funding in multiple grant programs for the same project. Each project may ONLY be funded by one MRAC grant program. However, groups

may utilize a Management Consulting Fund grant as a precursor for an Organizational Development project, in which case the MCF grant must be complete prior to the OD earliest project start date.

### **Specific Program Requirements:**

The Management Consulting Fund provides grants of up to \$1,750 to cover consulting fees related to small projects designed to strengthen the management or administration of the group. These grants may be used to conduct an assessment, resolve an issue, or create and/or implement a plan.

Projects must be **bite-sized**, articulating a focused project that is clearly within the scale and scope of a small management project and makes sense given the group's capacity (human resources, financial resources, time line, etc.).

Projects must be **learning oriented** engaging staff, the board of directors, and/or volunteers to ensure that completed work results in organizational learning that the group can carry into the future. Projects must advance the mission of the group and have the potential for significant impact.

Projects may not be absent of the **group's engagement**. Projects where a consultant provides a service without teaching or coaching organizational members does not meet the intent of this program. The group's staff, board and/or volunteers should be adequately involved in planning and implementing the project.

Before submitting an application, your group must **select the consultant** and other personnel who will participate in the project. MRAC maintains a database of consultants who have worked with small organizations and groups and can provide names upon request.

This grant program **does not fund project expenses other than consultant fees**. Fiscal sponsor fees, transportation, retreat expenses, etc. are not eligible expenses in this 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 MCF project must be complete before the OD grant earliest project start date for which you are applying.

There is **no cash match, and no project budget required** for the Management Consulting Fund program. If the project cost exceeds the \$1750 request amount, it is helpful to describe in the narrative how the group intends to fund the difference.

### **File Uploads**

You will upload several files. The upload process is similar to attaching a file to an email. Document uploads must be a MS Word, MS Excel, or PDF document.

Format ALL upload documents as follows:

- US Letter paper size (8.5 x 11) in portrait orientation with at least ¾ inch margins
- A text font equivalent to Times 12-point or larger (15 characters per inch)

Files you will upload:

- Narrative
- Consultant Resume
- Project Personnel
- Board of Directors/Advisory Committee
- Organizational Income and Expense

### **1. Narrative** (one upload – no more than two pages)

The narrative portion of your application is designed to help you address these criteria and briefly outline your organization's mission and history. Please provide enough information to help the panel evaluate your project in relation to each of the four criteria. Assume the panel is not familiar with your group, your discipline, nor the community you intend to serve. The panel will apply all four criteria to the application as a whole. Upload a narrative of no more than two (2) pages, addressing all four of the Management Consulting Fund criteria.

### **Community Need & Support**

- How do you define your community? Describe the individuals your organization serves (i.e. artists, attendees, participants, etc.). Describe the community that your organization or group serves by describing the diversity of people within this community (e.g. racial, ethnic, cultural, age, gender, ability, geographic, and/or economic, etc.).
- What shared interest, need, or demand exists within this community as it relates to your work? How will your project benefit the community that you have described?
- In what ways have members of the community shown their support for your project (e.g. collaborations and partnerships; financial contributions; volunteer time; in-kind donation of services, supplies or space)?

### **Organizational Challenge**

- Describe the underlying situation, problem, opportunity, issue, or need that this project intends to address. Note: you must be able to name the problem before you seek funding for a solution!
- How will exploring/solving this situation lead to a significant or long-term benefit to your group?
- What's compelling about this project at this point in time?
- Why is this project a priority for your organization?

### **Organizational Solution**

- Now that you've outlined the problem or opportunity, what's the solution? What outcome do you plan to achieve with this funding?
- What are the specific activities for which you seek funding?
- When will these activities take place and how long will they take to complete?

- How will the consultant work with key personnel to ensure organizational learning?
- Who are the personnel who will participate in the project? Who is the consultant and how was this individual selected?
- What are the tangible or intangible take-aways from this project?

### **Ability**

- Describe the planning process for your project. In what ways are your board members or advisory committee involved?
- Are the group's employees/volunteers, board/advisory committee members adequately involved and qualified for their roles in this project?
- Is the project clearly "doable" given your group's resources, project budget, allotted time frame, etc.?
- What is the timeline for your project milestones?
- How do you know that this consultant is the right fit for this project? What qualifications, skills, or past experiences does the consultant have that help them to best understand this project?
- How will you evaluate the project and its outcomes in relation to your stated organizational goals? How do these outcomes reflect that this was the best solution for the situation, challenge, or opportunity?

### **2. Consultant Resume** (one upload – maximum two pages)

Upload a maximum two-page biography or resume of your consultant. This information should include details that demonstrate the consultant's ability to carry out your organization's proposed project.

### **3. Project Personnel** (one upload – multiple pages)

Upload a list of the key people/groups involved in your project. Briefly describe their qualifications for the project. You may submit up to one page of information per person/group. Multiple pages must be submitted in one upload.

### **4. Board of Directors/Advisory Committee** (one upload – one page)

You are required to have a board of directors or advisory committee. Upload a one-page list of your board/committee members indicating their profession, organizational affiliation or area of expertise, and how they will be involved in the project.

### **5. Organizational Income-and-Expense Statement** (one upload – one page)

Arts groups with a history of programming: Download and complete the Excel Spreadsheet form with income-and-expense amounts for your most recently completed fiscal year (must be a 12-month period). Or, generate your own annual statement with the same information in the same format. Please describe the circumstances surrounding a substantial year-end surplus or deficit in the space provided on the Excel Spreadsheet, or in your Narrative.

First-time initiatives: new arts groups are not required to submit an Organizational Income-and-Expense Statement.

## 6. Fiscal Sponsor Agreement or Letter- *(one upload – for informal groups ONLY)*

A *fiscal sponsor* is a 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 a federally tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Minnesota; it may be a school, city, government agency or an arts or social services organization.

You will need to upload your agreement or a letter of agreement between your organization and the fiscal sponsor which must include the following:

- Written on the letterhead of the fiscal sponsor
- Dated within a year, and date must be on/before grant deadline
- Fiscal sponsor's EIN which is also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number and is issued by the IRS
- Signed by fiscal sponsor contact
- Contain name of the fiscal sponsor and the MRAC applicant group

## REVIEW AND DECISION PROCESS

1. **Staff:** MRAC staff review all applications for eligibility.
2. **Panel:** Eligible applications are reviewed monthly by a panel of MRAC board and staff members. An applicant's scoring may fall within a certain threshold which would require further clarifying information to determine successful funding; groups in this situation will receive follow-up questions after the panel review which must be addressed satisfactorily before the board will approve funding.
3. **MRAC Board of Directors:** The panel submits its recommendations to the MRAC board of directors who make the final decision on funding. Within two weeks of the panel review, applicants receive notification via email of the board's decision. If you would like to receive panel comments on your application's review, you may contact your program director. You may reapply for the same project for the following or future deadlines, but applications that are denied funding twice are not allowed to be resubmitted.
4. **Appeal:** Appeals must be made in writing within 30 days of the notification of the board decision. Contact MRAC for a copy of the appeal process.