metro regional arts council

Grant Guideline 2018-2019

NEXT STEP FUND

Individual Artist support up to $5,000 for career advancement

Deadline:
March 4, 2019
Earliest Start Date:
June 26, 2019

Funded By:
The McKnight Foundation's arts program is founded on the belief that Minnesota thrives when its artists thrive. The McKnight Foundation supports working artists to create and contribute to vibrant communities

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:
Witt Siasoco
Contact Information:
witt@mrac.org | 651-645-0402

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

MᶜKNIGHT FOUNDATION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Next Step Fund, funded by the McKnight Foundation, provides project grants up to **$5,000** to professional artists in any discipline for the purpose of career development and artistic achievement. Applicants may be at any stage of their career, but must demonstrate achievement in their artistic field and have a history of public presentation or community contribution.

Successful projects will communicate a clearly defined set of activities that respond to a compelling challenge or opportunity for the individual applicant with the intent to raise the individual to the 'next step' in their artistic career. MRAC awards approximately 35 to 40 Next Step grants (about 8% of total submissions) annually, making it a highly competitive program.

An ideal Next Step Fund project is one that:

- helps an artist overcome a barrier to significant, long-term success, professionalize or increase artistic output and quality,
- completes a project that marks a significant milestone in their career, **and/or**
- reaches a new community or market.

The following are **examples** of compelling projects:

- The acquisition of equipment to help an artist increase quality, diversify, or otherwise improve upon their artistic process or product.
- The development of a business plan, creation of promotional materials, or an artist portfolio.
- Participation in a training, master class or workshop that will enhance the artist's abilities (enrollment in a degree or certificate program is not eligible).
- The production or presentation of a *significant work that represents a milestone* in an artist's career.
- The production or presentation of a work that expands an artist's community or market (e.g. geographic region, cultural community, galleries, curators, professional network, etc.).

A next *project* (next exhibition, next album, next film, etc.) without career reach is not a compelling project in this grant program. Projects where the community is the primary beneficiary are not compelling Next Step projects as the focus needs to be on the individual artist's needs.

IMPORTANT DATES

MRAC Fiscal Year July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019	Application Deadline	Panel Review	Earliest Start Date
Next Step Fund	March 4, 2019 11:59 P.M.	April-June	June 26, 2019

BEFORE APPLYING - RESOURCES

Due to the large number of applicants to this program, the program directors **cannot** give individual feedback on grant applications. Use the following resources:

    a. **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

    b. **Grant Library**- All applications submitted to MRAC are public information. MRAC maintains a library at our offices where you can review all previously submitted finalist applications and their ratings. You may also visit www.mrac.org, click on "Grants" and follow links to "Next Step Funds Recent Grant Awards" and request 2 previously successful applications to be emailed as pdfs; contact your program director to have these sample grants sent.

HOW TO APPLY & ELIGIBILITY

MRAC grant applications **MUST** be completed online by **11:59 p.m**. We do not accept incomplete or late applications. Avoid last minute issues with the online submission by submitting early. Please read guidelines thoroughly to ensure eligibility.

Applicants must meet ALL of the following requirements:

➔ Emerging, mid-career and established artists, working in any discipline, who have evidence of artistic excellence respective of their career stage.

➔ Have resided in the seven-county metro area during the entire year prior to the deadline (March 4, 2018 – March 4, 2019). Projects do NOT need to take place within the seven-county metro area but applicants MUST reside in the seven-county metro area.

➔ 18 years of age or older.

Applicants cannot be:

● Individuals seeking to begin a career as an artist, or make a professional transition to the arts. Finalists will be asked to submit professional work samples demonstrating artistic excellence.

- Artists currently enrolled in a degree or certification program in his/her respective art form, unless the applicant can demonstrate they maintain a career as a professional artist outside of their educational program.
- Arts administrators seeking support for their administrative profession.

This program does NOT fund:
- Projects where the applicant is applying on behalf of a duo, group, or organization. This program provides support for the professional and artistic development of an artist independent from their organizational identity. For example, a choreographer may apply for an independent study, but not to produce or stage a work marketed as a production of their dance company. MRAC has other grant programs to fund arts projects of groups and organizations.
- Projects that include expenses that will be paid or incurred before the earliest project start date (June 26, 2019). Examples: airline tickets, registration fees, etc.
- Support to sustain an established artist's ongoing profession. There must be a clearly defined project that helps an artist take the "Next Step" in their career.
- Activities that engage in political lobbying, serve the religious socialization of participants, or discriminate against persons or groups.

How many Next Step Fund Grants may an individual receive?
- o   Submit one Next Step grant application per MRAC fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).
- o   Recipients of a Next Step Fund grant in MRAC's three previous fiscal years (FY16, FY17, and FY18) are **not** eligible to apply in this fiscal year.
- o   Next Step grant recipients of fiscal years **before the last three** are eligible to apply if their **previously funded project is complete**.

STAGE ONE: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL NEXT STEP FUND APPLICANTS

Completing the Online Application Form

TIP: The online application form allows you to periodically save your work. Once saved, you may log off and return at a later time to complete the application. The "**Save As Draft**" button is located at the bottom of the form.

CHECKLIST OF REQUIREMENTS
- ☐   Project Description: Provide a BRIEF description of your project (e.g. first solo exhibition, creation of a business plan, purchase a new kiln, etc.). This information will only be used as a quick reference for panel reviewers and MRAC staff.
- ☐   Amount Requested: Amount requested may not exceed $5,000

- ☐ Location of Permanent Residence: Applicants must have resided in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott or Washington County during the entire year prior to the deadline.
- ☐ Artistic discipline: Select the discipline that best describes your work as an artist. This is for internal use to determine if this grant program is reaching all types of artists and is not shared with panelists.
- ☐ Project Start Date: Project may not begin before the earliest project start date (June 26, 2019).
- ☐ Project End Date: There is no requirement that projects be completed by a predetermined date. The date you provide will determine when your final report is due. Final reports are due two months after the conclusion of the project's activities. Projects with extended timelines (i.e. over one year from date of award) may be required to submit an interim report.
- ☐ Criteria: The Artist and The Project (see details below)
- ☐ Resume or CV upload (2 pages maximum)
- ☐ Demographic Information (optional. Only used internally, not shared with panelists)
- ☐ Certification Signature (electronic check box)
  You must certify that the statements contained in this application and the information detailed in your resume are true and correct to the best of your knowledge and belief. You also certify that you are at least 18 years of age as of March 4, 2019, and were a permanent resident of the seven county metro area between March 4, 2018 - March 4, 2019.

Criteria

The narrative portion of the application is the foundation for the panel's review of your application. Each criteria will be submitted as a text field on the online application form. You may prepare your responses in another software program (e.g. Microsoft Word), and cut-and-paste your responses. Please note, the 4,000 character limit includes spaces.

The Artist *(No more than 4,000 characters - approximately one page)*
Use this section to describe your artistic vision, your body of work, and your professional goals. This section may be very similar to an artist statement, but should emphasize a self-reflection of your artistic and professional accomplishments to date, particularly as they relate to a clearly defined path towards the future.

1. Describe your work and your artistic vision. Briefly note any significant accomplishments that demonstrate achievement in your artistic field. (This will also be evidenced in your résumé or CV).

2. What are your career goals, both professional and artistic? Where are you in meeting those goals?

3. What significant barriers or unique opportunities exist that hinder or would help you in achieving your goals? Instead of focusing on "a lack of money," re-frame the discussion on those opportunities that would be available were money not a factor.

The Project *(No more than 4,000 characters - approximately one page)*
This section should focus on the project for which you are seeking funding. Be as specific as possible, and be sure to make a strong connection between the proposed project and your unique needs as an artist. Ideal projects are those that support your goals and vision outlined in the Artist section.

1. Describe the project for which you are seeking funding. Please be specific. Not all panelists will be familiar with your discipline – be sure to avoid technical jargon or assume familiarity with projects of this type.
2. How will this project help you advance artistically and professionally? Please be sure to relate this discussion to your artistic and professional goals. The panel's evaluation will focus on the project's potential impact on **you as an individual artist**, as opposed to an external community or broader audience.
3. Projects should be manageable in scope relative to the $5,000 award. Although a formal budget is not required, the panel has found it very helpful when applicants note the major expenses and timeline related to their project. If more than $5,000 is required, what additional sources of income will be secured?

Résumé or CV *(one upload – maximum 2 pages)*
Your résumé or CV may be no more than two (2) pages in length. You will submit your résumé via a file upload to the online application form. Document uploads must be a MS Word, MS Excel, or PDF document. Additional pages beyond the 2 page limit will be deleted and not shared with panelists. Since all finalist applications are public and have potential to be shared with future applicants, you may choose to keep personal information off your résumé or CV.

Please include a résumé or CV that lists your professional experience and successes, achievements, publications, honors, credentials, education, work experience (if relevant), etc. This document should evidence achievement in your artistic discipline, and demonstrate a history of public presentation or community contribution. The panel will use this document to help evaluate:
1. Your degree of achievement in your artistic discipline;
2. Your history of public presentation or community contribution, respective of your career stage;
3. Your artistic and professional goals in the context of your career stage;
4. Whether your proposed project is appropriate, given your professional history.

To upload your résumé or CV:
- Open your draft online application form.
- Scroll down to the application form's section titled "Résumé".
- In the section titled "Résumé upload," click the button titled "Upload a File".
- Select your document as you would when attaching a document to an email.
- You can replace this uploaded document at any time before submitting.

Reviewing Your Application

It is highly recommended that you review your application before submitting. To do so, click on the **"Application Packet"** button at the top of the Application page. This will download a PDF of your application including all uploaded files. Please check that all information is correct and all uploaded files are included. If an uploaded file does not appear on the application packet PDF, please contact your program director, as applications with incorrect or missing file uploads are ineligible. You may save this file for your records.

Submitting Your Completed Application

When finished, click the "**Submit Application**" button located at the bottom of the page.

IMPORTANT! Your application will not be eligible if you do not officially submit your application by 11:59 p.m. on the day of the deadline. Once you click "Submit Application" you will no longer be able to edit your application. However, if you find that you accidentally submitted an application before it was ready and it is before the deadline, you may contact MRAC staff to revert the application to draft so you can continue to work.

An automated submission confirmation email will be sent to your login email address from administrator@grantinterface.com

STAGE ONE: REVIEW & DECISION PROCESS

- MRAC staff reviews all applications for eligibility. Applications that do not follow format (e.g. submitting a résumé longer than two pages) may be deemed ineligible.
- A peer review panel reviews all eligible applications based upon the program criteria. Panelists will rate each application on a scale of 1-10 (10 being high). Scores are available to applicants upon request.
- Applicants will be notified in early May whether or not their applications will advance to the next stage.

STAGE TWO: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR FINALISTS

Work Samples *(required <u>only</u> of finalists)*

1. Only those applicants who are invited to the second round of review will be asked to submit a work sample. **Finalists must submit work samples within one week of notification.**
2. Your narrative response to the grant criteria will remain the foundation for the panel's review of your request, and your work sample should correspond as closely as possible to the

application request. Generally, samples should be of work completed within the past four years.
3. All work samples must be submitted electronically through the MRAC Dropbox account. Dropbox is a file hosting service that allows MRAC to manage files in a web-based folder. Detailed instructions as to how to submit using Dropbox will be sent to finalists.
4. Specifics about formats for work samples will be sent to all finalists.

Retention of Work Samples
o All work samples remain the property of the artist.
o Work samples will be deleted from the MRAC Dropbox once the MRAC board has approved panel recommendations.
o If a work sample is not available, contact the program director to discuss alternatives.

STAGE TWO: FINAL REVIEW PROCESS

1. **Panel**: A peer review panel reviews all final applications. The panel meetings are ALL open to the public; and applicants will be notified of the meeting; and are encouraged to attend. Panel recordings are shared in your grant record within one-week of review.
2. **MRAC Board of Directors:** The panel submits its recommendations to the MRAC board of directors who make the final decision on funding.
3. **Appeal:** Appeals should be made in writing within 30 days of the notification of the board decision. Contact MRAC for a copy of the appeal process.

INSTRUCTIONS: REQUEST NEXT STEP FUND SAMPLE PROPOSAL

Due to the volume of requests, MRAC can email up to **two** of the following successful applications submitted in previous years. Visit the MRAC website to view the previously awarded grants in this program.

To request copies of successful Next Step Fund proposals:
1. **Send email** request to mrac@mrac.org
2. **Subject line** should read "Request Next Step Fund sample proposals"
3. **The body of the email** : Include names of up to two Next Step Fund grant recipients to receive a copy of their successful proposals.

Staff will reply with the respective proposals attached.

See website https://mrac.org/grants/next-step-fund/recent-next-step-fund-grant-awards/ for the past 2 years of grant awards.