Grant Guidelines 2019-2020

CAPITAL

Organizational support up to $10,000 to purchase equipment and related supplies and services or to make capital improvements.

Application Deadline:
September 9, 2019

Earliest Grant Expenditure Date:
November 27, 2019

Program Director:
Bethany Whitehead

Contact Information:
bethany@mrac.org | 651-523-6388

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

Metropolitan Regional Arts Council
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651-645-0402 | mrac@mrac.org

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 Capital grant program provides grants of up to $10,000 to purchase equipment or other tangible asset and related supplies and services, or to make capital improvements for arts groups within the seven-county metro area: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. Capital grant applications must show evidence that thorough planning has taken place.

Examples:
- Purchase of equipment (musical instruments, lighting board, video or sound equipment, etc.)
- Purchase of computer hardware and software
- Facility improvements to increase accessibility
- Facility improvements to performance or office space

MRAC funds applications where arts and community intersect

**ARTS MANAGEMENT**
Organizational Challenge
Organizational Solution
Ability

**COMMUNITY**
Community Need & Support
Equity & Inclusion

**IMPORTANT DATES**

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<th>MRAC Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Application Deadline</th>
<th>Panel Review</th>
<th>Earliest Grant Expenditure Date</th>
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<td>Sept. 9, 2019 11:59 p.m.</td>
<td>Week of Nov. 11, 2019</td>
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**REQUIRED MATCH**
10:1 match of dollars is required for this grant program. The match can be general operating funds, past surpluses, other grants, and earned revenue you plan to raise.

If you are requesting $10,000 in funding, you must secure $1000 from another source.

See more details in the Project Budget Income Section
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. **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:

1. **Program Directors** - MRAC Program Directors are available for questions on eligibility and program intent, project idea development, grant attachment verification, and can, upon request, review your application materials in advance of the deadline.

2. **Grant Application Workshops** - MRAC offers free grant application workshops 3-6 weeks before the deadline to learn about the grant program and to discuss project ideas. Check the online calendar for dates and times: [www.mrac.org/events](http://www.mrac.org/events)

3. **Previously Funded Grants** - You may visit [www.mrac.org](http://www.mrac.org), click on “Grants” and follow links to view “Recent Grant Awards” and request up to 3 previously successful applications per grant program to be emailed as pdfs: contact your program director to have these sample grants sent.

4. **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.

5. **First Fridays with Program Directors** - The first Friday of the month from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. there are open office hours where you can drop in and have conversation with MRAC Program Directors. No RSVP is needed. Please check MRAC calendar in case of changes.

HOW TO APPLY & ELIGIBILITY

MRAC grant applications **MUST** be completed online and received by MRAC no later than 11:59:59 p.m. To access the online portal, visit [www.mrac.org](http://www.mrac.org) and select ‘Manage My Organizational Grant.’ The online interface allows for Google Translate to access the application in a variety of languages. Groups should only use one organizational grant record, 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 project activities MUST be located within the 7-county (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington) Twin Cities metro area.**
Applicant groups must be ONE of the following:
• Federally tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organizations with annual operating expenses of less than $400,000.
• Informal and/or unincorporated arts-focused groups 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 and must apply with a fiscal sponsor (see page 9 for more information).

All Capital applicants must also:
• Have demonstrated two years of programming or service history by the grant deadline.
• If the organization is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, the group must also be registered and active with the Minnesota Secretary of State as a Nonprofit Corporation on the grant deadline. Groups who are informal and using a fiscal sponsor do not need to be registered with the Secretary of State, but their fiscal sponsor must be active with the Minnesota Secretary of State as a Nonprofit Corporation on the grant deadline. Groups may verify status or register at mblsportal.sos.state.mn.us.
• If the group has an in-progress MRAC Organizational Development or Capital grant, all activities and expenditures must be complete in their entirety by November 27, 2019.

Applicant groups cannot be:
• Organizations registered with the MN Secretary of State as a profit-making Minnesota business (e.g. Business Corporation, Limited Liability Partnership, MN Public Benefit Corporations, etc.).
• 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:
• Production or presentation of arts events.
• Purchase of land or buildings, endowments, debt reduction or cash reserves.
• Projects that have received or are seeking support from any other MRAC grant program. However, groups may utilize a Management Consulting Fund grant as a precursor for a Capital project, in which case the MCF grant must be complete prior to the Capital earliest grant expenditure date.
• Grant Expenditure Date: MRAC does not fund projects that are already under way. MRAC defines a project’s earliest grant expenditure date as the point at which any items in the project budget have been expended, or financial and other commitments are made that set the project in motion (e.g. purchase of equipment, items ordered, staff time allotted to this project).
• Project End Date: MRAC funds received in FY19 cannot have activities that extend beyond June 30, 2021.
● Activities that attempt to influence any state or federal legislation or appropriation; to support activities that are essentially for the religious socialization of the participants or audience; or discriminate against persons or groups.
● Travel expenses to or from Minnesota. You may engage an out-of-state artist within your project, but their travel expense to get to or from Minnesota cannot be included in a MRAC request.
● Expenses to purchase alcoholic beverages or to pay associated costs (servers, insurance, liquor licenses, etc.).

During each MRAC fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), groups may receive:
➔ 1 Arts Project Support grant
➔ 1 Arts Learning grant
➔ 1 Organizational Support grant (Organizational Development or Capital)
➔ 2 Management Consulting Fund grants
  ◆ 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 a MRAC-funded project in process may apply for a subsequent grant in the same program category if the project from a previous fiscal year is completed before MRAC’s published earliest grant expenditure date for the new project. A Management Consulting Fund project must be complete before a new one is awarded.
  ◆ 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 REQUIREMENTS

The following documents will be reviewed by the panel.

File Uploads
You will upload several files. Document uploads must be a MS Word, MS Excel, or PDF document. It is highly recommended to create an Application Packet within the grant interface to assure your documents uploaded correctly; errors in formatting may have an adverse affect on your application.

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)
● Use criteria headers within the document, but do not use Word function Headers or Footers as this affects formatting

CHECKLIST OF ELIGIBLE FILES (bold are required of all applicants):
  □ Narrative (one upload – no more than five pages)
  □ Equipment Purchase Bids (one upload – maximum one page)
1. **Narrative** *(one upload – no more than five pages)*

The narrative portion of your application is designed to help you outline your organization’s mission and history as well as address each of MRAC’s five criteria: Community Need & Support, Equity & Inclusion, Organizational Challenge, Organizational Solution, Ability.

Provide enough information to help the review panel evaluate your project in relation to EACH criteria. Assume the panel is not familiar with your group, your discipline, nor the community you intend to serve, and use the narrative to provide this information. The panel will apply ALL five criteria to the application as a whole.

**Mission and History**

- In one paragraph, summarize your group’s purpose/mission and your arts programming history. How will this project advance your group’s mission?

**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)?

**Equity & Inclusion**

- Within the context of your community, describe how your organization identifies and proactively addresses barriers to engaging historically marginalized, targeted, and underserved people and identities that may otherwise have limited access to your group’s activity. Examples might include:
  - IPOC (*Indigenous people and People of Color* including Native American, Black/African/African American, Afro Latinx, Caribbean, Chicanx/Mexican, Central American, South American, Middle Eastern/North African, Southeast Asian/Asian/Pacific Islander)
  - immigrants and/or refugees
- economically disadvantaged individuals
- people with disabilities
- LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual) people

- Explain how your organization or group is best positioned to engage with and support the community you have described. How are they represented among your leadership, artists, and decision-makers?
- In what ways has your group made attempts to be more equitable and inclusive?
- If you are an organization or group that primarily serves people identified above, what are the unique ways in which you are engaging with members of your community who are not yet connected to your work?
- In what ways does your organization or group ensure that people with disabilities can participate? Examples might include ADA accessible venue, ASL interpretation, audio described performance, large print programs, sensory tours, etc.
- If there are financial costs associated with your organization or group, what considerations are made for those who may find such costs a barrier? Examples might include ticket discounts, scholarships, waived membership dues, transportation reimbursements, etc.

Organizational Challenge

- Describe the underlying situation – problem, opportunity, issue, or need – that your project intends to address. You must be able to name the problem/opportunity before you can accurately define a project.
- What is compelling about this situation? How will addressing this important opportunity/need have a significant, long-term impact on your organization?
- How might this project lead to an enhanced ability for you to accomplish your artistic vision?
- Why is this a priority at this moment in time?

Organizational Solution

- What is the solution your group proposes to address the organizational challenge?
- What is your work plan and timeline? What are you going to purchase or what improvements are you wishing to make? How did you arrive at the specific equipment configuration and/or specific capital improvements you are requesting?
- Who was involved in the planning? What are the specific activities or steps in this capital project? When will these activities take place and how long will they take to complete? Who will participate in this project (e.g. purchasing, installing and end-users)?
- Who are the key personnel involved in this project? If current employees or volunteer staff will carry out the project, explain how it will be integrated into their workloads (e.g. shift of responsibilities, extra hours).

Ability

Do you have a demonstrated ability to carry out this project? Use this section to provide any additional useful information to demonstrate that this is a well-planned project that your group can clearly achieve. The panel will consider such things as:
● Are the group’s employees/volunteers, board/advisory committee members adequately involved and qualified for their roles in this project?
● Was there a reasonable process for selecting a vendor or contractor?
● How will the acquired items be cared for to ensure long-term benefit to the organization?
● Is the project clearly “doable” given your group’s resources, project budget, timeline, etc.?
● If you plan to make changes to a leased space, describe the permission granted to do the work and long-term plans for using the space.
● If using a consultant, how the consultant was selected, and their role in the project. What specific skills, prior consulting experiences, or familiarity with your community make this consultant the best fit for 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 is the best solution for the situation, challenge, or opportunity?

2. **Equipment Purchase** *(required) (one upload – maximum one page)*
Use the template on the online application or one you create to describe the equipment and related supplies and services, with estimated costs. Provide a summary of the names and total costs of at least three vendors from which you have obtained competitive estimates or bids on all equipment. Do not include the actual bids. Include a brief statement explaining with which vendor your group intends to proceed. Groups are not required to select the lowest bid.

3. **Landlord Letter** *(if applicable) (one upload – one page)*
If you are requesting funds to install permanent equipment or to make capital improvements to a space or facility you do not own, include a signed letter from your landlord granting your organization permission to do the work detailed in the application.

4. **Consultant Resume** *(if applicable) (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.

5. **Project Personnel** *(one upload – multiple pages)*
Upload a list of the key people and groups involved in your project. Briefly describe their qualifications for the project. Do not include the mission or history of your organization in this section. You may submit up to one page of information per person/group. Multiple pages must be submitted in one upload. Individuals and organizations named on this list and in the narrative must know at the time of the application that they are included in the project.

6. **Board of Directors/Advisory Committee** *(one upload – one page)*
You are required to have a board of directors or advisory committee, encompassing three individuals as a minimum. Upload a one-page list of your board/committee members.
indicating their profession, organizational affiliation and/or area of expertise. This is a public document so you may choose to omit contact information.

7. Project Expense Budget *(one upload – one page)*

**→ Your project’s total expense must equal your project’s total income.**

Download and complete the Excel budget form or generate your own form with the same information in the same format. Once completed, upload a one-page project budget expense. Include all cash costs. Do not include unrealized income such as scholarships or in-kind support.

- If you request funds for more than one item, all items must be clearly related. Example: lighting board, installation costs, and lighting instruments.
- Personnel expenses may include only 1) services directly related to equipment, installation, and set-up or 2) contractor fees and labor associated with capital improvements.
- One-time expenses related to the maintenance or acquisition of a capital purchase may be included (e.g. shipping, shipping insurance, warranty purchase or other service agreements).
- You may **not** request funds for administration or planning of the project, as it is expected that those activities have already occurred.
- Your request may not be part of a larger capital campaign. If your total project budget exceeds $50,000, you must call MRAC staff and receive written approval before applying.

8. Project Income Budget *(one upload - one page)*

**Your project’s total income must equal your project’s total expense.**

Download and complete the Excel budget form from the MRAC website or generate your own form with the same information in the same format. Once completed, upload a one-page project budget income. Do **not** include in-kind goods and services. Include all **cash** income (cash income is defined as money, i.e. cash, credit card, check, being received).

**→ Project Matching Funds**

For every ten MRAC dollars requested, you must match or raise one dollar from a cash source other than Minnesota State funding sources. Match sources may include general operating funds, past surpluses, other grants, and earned income or revenue you plan to raise specifically for this project.

The MRAC grant request must be included in your Project Budget Income.

- Check your math and budget figures carefully. Project budget errors or ineligible expenses, including in the notes section, may affect your MRAC request or result in your application being deemed ineligible.
9. Organizational Income-and-Expense Statement (one upload – one page)
Download and complete the Excel Spreadsheet form with income-and-expense amounts for your last fiscal year (must be a 12-month period). Include the dates of your last fiscal year (the entirety of this date range must be in the past). Please describe the circumstances surrounding a substantial year-end surplus or deficit in the space provided on the Excel Spreadsheet, or within your Narrative. If you submit a Quickbooks Profit & Loss or another form developed by the organization, assure that it fits on one page and the same information is presented.

☐ This document should be an accurate overview of income and expenses for the organization or group and MRAC expects to see surpluses or deficits on this form.

10. Fiscal Sponsor 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, be registered with the IRS with a Minnesota address, and must be active as a Nonprofit Corporation with the Minnesota Secretary of State.

You will need to upload a letter on the fiscal sponsor’s letterhead that outlines the agreement between your organization and the fiscal sponsor. The letter must include the following:

● The name of the organization and the project being proposed
● Fiscal sponsor’s EIN which is also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number
● The mission of the applicant group
● Signature of the fiscal sponsor contact
● A date within three months of the grant deadline

OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION
Within the online grant interface, in addition to demographic information about your group and intended participants, you will be asked to submit the proposed outcomes and the evaluation plan for the project. This is for reporting and tracking purposes and is not shared with the panel, but is shared with the Minnesota State Arts Board. It is important for the application to also include this information within the grant narrative.

Outcomes Proposed
In two sentences, describe the measurable outcomes you hope to achieve through this project. What skill, knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition will change? Who will be affected by the change? Your answer may be brief. Examples of outcomes may include: “Staff require fewer hours weekly to complete marketing tasks because of new computers.” or “Four new audience members who use wheelchairs can access the space with the new ramp for each production.”
Evaluation Plan
In two sentences, describe your methods for evaluating your anticipated outcomes. Examples of evaluation methods may include, but are not limited to: Audience/participant surveys, board meeting discussions, data tracking, etc.

REVIEW AND DECISION PROCESS
1. Staff: MRAC staff review all applications for eligibility.
2. Panel: A peer review panel reviews all eligible 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.
3. MRAC Board of Directors: The panel submits its recommendations to the MRAC board of directors who make the final decision on funding.
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.

IF FUNDED
- An authorized signer for your group or organization will need to complete an online grant agreement.
- A W9 form will need to be uploaded by the applicant. If fiscally sponsored you will need a W9 from your fiscal sponsor.
- Funds are sent via check to the address on file in the online account within one month of the signed agreement being signed. Make sure the address is current with all necessary information and mail can be received at this location.
- The group will need to use the appropriate language and logos on all promotion of the funded activities.
- Groups are required to spend the entirety of the MRAC grant award. In cases where a match was required, groups are required to raise and spend the match requirement as well the grant award.
- An online final report is due 2 months after the project end date that was entered at the time of application. You must show expenditures at or greater to the budgeted amount or funds will need to be returned.
- Any project changes to the activities, timeline, or budget need to be approved in writing by the program director. Reach out with any questions or changes to the project before changing the project, as not all project changes can be approved.
- Overdue final reports may affect future eligibility to apply for and/or receive MRAC funding.