

ARTISTS' FUTURES

A program of the [Seeding Cultural Treasures Initiative](#)
Made possible by McKnight and Ford Foundations.

Artists' Futures provides resources directly to [artists](#) and [culture bearers](#) of African, Afro-Latinx, Afro-Caribbean, Latinx, Chicanx, Asian/Pacific Islander, and SWANA (South West Asian and North African) descent residing in the 7-county metropolitan area (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties), and artists who are Native American/American Indian/Native Alaskan residing in Minnesota and the 11 Tribal nations that share the same geography.

Artists' Futures provides financial support of \$35,000 to individual artists along with additional resources and support. Artists' Futures is a professional development, skill building and networking [cohort](#) for artists working in any artistic discipline at any stage in their career. The Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC) is interested in investing in artists by providing support that allows them to grow their ability to take creative risks, and build technical skills that could contribute to a sustainable and successful career in the arts.

Artists have been major contributors to American culture, they play an important role in building stronger communities, and they weave connections across communities. Yet, in Minnesota, they continue to experience some of the greatest disparities in the country. MRAC wants Artists' Futures to be more than a financial boost in artists' careers. Rather, we want this to be a boost in their lives. We are interested in investing in artists by providing support that allows them to grow their ability to take creative risks, and build technical skills that could contribute to a sustainable and successful career in the arts.

Artists' Futures was developed for and by a diverse group of artists and cultural leaders who are members of the artist communities this program intends to serve. A group of 11 advisors along with MRAC staff engaged with artists across backgrounds, experiences and cultures in several intimate focus groups and one-on-one meetings, engaging nearly 100 individuals. The responses shared during focus groups directly informed the design of Artists' Futures.

Note: Throughout this document we use the term "artist" to refer to both artists and culture bearers.

Goals of Artists' Futures:

- Selected artists have the resources they need to take risks, and creatively challenge themselves during the program.
- Selected artists broaden their networks to include relationships and strategies that could provide long-term support.

- MRAC will provide a bundle of resources (financial, access to space, equipment, and people) that is significant enough to shift the selected artists' artistic presence, practice, and life.

Program Details

Virtual Information Session: August 19, 2022, 12:00pm

Submission Deadline: October 3, 2022, 11:59pm

Notification Date: February 22, 2023

Financial Support: \$35,000 ([unrestricted](#))

Additional resources: \$2,000 for [professional development](#), plus access to vetted partnering professionals/spaces/organizations

Cohort Period: Support from MRAC and access to partners from Feb 2023 - Feb 2025

Participation Requirements:

- Attend a 90min Zoom meet & greet event to meet the cohort of selected artists, network and learn how to access the available resources. A financial advisor/tax professional will join us for a portion of this meeting to talk about tax requirements and answer questions.
- Attend six (6) scheduled networking lunch hour meetings. These events will focus on expanding the network of selected artists by building relationships to other makers, arts professionals and arts organizations. These meetings will be coordinated in partnership with selected artists to best accommodate schedules and meet the needs of the cohort.

Number of Selected Artists: 10

Eligibility

- Individual artists and culture bearers of African, Afro-Latinx, Afro-Caribbean, Latinx, Chicanx, Asian/Pacific Islander, and SWANA descent residing in the 7-county metropolitan area, and artists who are Native American/American Indian/Native Alaskan residing in Minnesota and the 11 Tribal nations that share the same geography are eligible for Artists' Futures.
- Artists must live in the eligible region for at least 1 year prior to the deadline and during the entire contract period.
- Artists must have an active artistic practice. Meaning artists must have been creating their own artwork during the past 5 years, and must be able to provide work samples that were created between 2017-2022.
- Artists must be available to participate (virtually or in-person) in cohort meetings during the two year cohort period. **Note:** If you have doubts about your ability to commit to a cohort experience, or are not interested in expanding your artistic community, pursuing professional development opportunities, or sharing knowledge and resources, this program may not be a good fit for you.
- Selected artists must have an ITIN (Individual Tax Identification Number) or SSN (Social Security Number), as the financial award is taxable income and will be reported on a 1099 form. *(This increased income may impact certain benefits. We encourage you to work with a financial advisor to determine the payment option best suited for you.)*
- Artists must be at least 18 years of age on the deadline date (October 3, 2022).
- Artists currently enrolled in a traditional arts degree program to pursue a BFA or similar degree are not eligible.

Want to be considered?

If you are an artist who meets the above mentioned eligibility and you want to be considered for the Artists' Futures cohort, please send us an Introduction Letter or Video through [MRAC's Submittable platform](https://mrac.submittable.com/) (https://mrac.submittable.com/). We will consider submissions from eligible artists or an "Artist Advocate" (see explanation below).

Letter/Video Submission

This submission will be used to determine eligibility, learn about artists' interests, and ensure the diversity of the selected group of artists. We aim to support artists in a diverse range of career stages, artistic disciplines, races/ethnicities, and demographic identities.

Be an Advocate for an Artist

MRAC recognizes that individuals often come across opportunities that they would like to recommend people for and we encourage this type of support through our submission process. If you would like to submit an artist's name for consideration, or, if you are an artist and would like someone to submit on your behalf, they may submit as an "Artist Advocate". Advocates do not need to get permission from the artist you are advocating for or notify the artist. Artists will have the opportunity to opt out of consideration if they do not wish to participate. **Note:** Advocates may only create one submission per deadline.

Submission Process

You have the option to submit in one of the following ways:

- Upload a document file
- Upload a video file
- Upload an audio file
- Fill in the text boxes in our submission form

Choose the submission type that feels the most comfortable for you. There is no advantage or disadvantage of one submission type over another, as awardees will be selected at random.

Short Letter/Video (Recommended length 1-3 paragraphs/ 2-5 mins)

Below are the required questions that each submission should provide responses to. We want to learn about your artwork and creative process:

1. What do you make/create? What is your artistic practice?
2. Describe your artistic interests.
3. How long have you been pursuing art and presenting your works?
4. What creative projects are you currently working on?
5. Share any recently completed projects?
6. Tell us about any upcoming projects you will pursue over the next 2 years?
7. Why do you want to participate in the Artists' Futures program?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share? (optional)

Additional Required Fields

MRAC will also need to collect the information below during the submission process:

- Legal first and last name
- Preferred Name
- Gender Pronouns
- Who is completing the form: Select “Artist” or “Artist Advocate”
 - If you are the Advocate, you will be guided through questions about the Artist you are advocating for.
- Email address
- Phone number
- Physical residential address of the submitter (MRAC staff follow-up with artists recommended through Advocates to obtain this information and confirm eligibility and interest.)
- Select all identity demographics that apply. (MRAC staff follow-up with artists recommended through Advocates to confirm this information.)
- List all of the artistic disciplines artist works in
- Select a career stage: emerging artist, early career artist, mid career artist, or professional artist. MRAC recognizes that these definitions are subjective and asks artists to self-define.
- Link to or upload samples of your original artworks
- Optional upload: Resume or CV (this will be used to help determine career stage but is not required)

Work Samples Requirements

MRAC requires that artists submit links or upload work samples of their artwork so that we can confirm artists have a current artistic practice. Work samples should be original creations produced between 2017 - 2022. **Note:** this submission is to determine eligibility. We will not be making judgements on artistic merit or quality.

If the work you are including in a work sample is a product of a collaboration, please describe your role in the creative and decision making process.

Allowable Work Samples:

Links to artist websites
Links to images
Links to written works
Links to audio or video
Links to interviews and press
Links to published work
Uploads of images, video, audio, and written works

Allowable Work Sample formats

Images - jpg, jpeg, png, tif, heic
Text - doc, docx, pdf, rtf
Video - avi, mov, qt, wmv, mp4
Audio - mp3, wav, aiff

Note: Work Samples may be works in progress.

Other Considerations

If you were a FY2022 Next Step Fund finalist and you meet the eligibility requirements you do not have to complete a submission. Your name will automatically be placed into consideration. If you do not wish to be considered you will have an opportunity to opt out.

How We Decide

Artists of African, Afro-Latinx, Afro-Caribbean, Latinx, Chicanx, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American/American Indian/Native Alaskan, and SWANA descent have been, and continue to be under-resourced and under-valued for their contributions to Minnesota. With Artists' Futures MRAC will explore a new framework for how to support these artists. MRAC recognizes the disparities in funding structures and understands that the decision making process within these systems can feel like gatekeeping. We aim to press against this norm by exploring a process that removes bias and judgments on value and worthiness.

A panel of Readers will review each submission for eligibility. If questions arise or additional clarity is needed, a Reader may reach out to you.

All submissions that meet the eligibility criteria will be entered into one or more priority eligibility groupings as well as the 'General Artist Pool' and randomly selected. These groupings are in direct response to disparities within the artist community that this program serves. We hope that artists feel comfortable sharing the fullness of their identities, experiences and individuality with us. We celebrate intersectionality and are fully committed to honoring the complexity of marginalized identities. Artists who have intersecting identities/experiences will be represented in each grouping that describes them, giving them more than one opportunity to be chosen.

One name from each grouping will be selected at random. In the unlikely event that a single name is selected in multiple groupings we will continue selections until a unique name is drawn in each grouping. One name will be drawn for each priority eligibility grouping and five names will be drawn from the General Artist Pool.

Groupings

Focus Group Participants - 1
Artists Experiencing Unstable Housing - 1
Nonbinary/Gender nonconforming/Trans Artists- 1
Artists with Disabilities/Disabled Artists - 1
Emerging Artist - 1
General Artist Pool - 5

Accessibility

MRAC is using Submittable for this submission process. The Submittable platform has been certified to meet the needs of people with blindness, low-vision, deafness and hearing loss,

learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity, and combinations of these. Submittable follows Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (2.0) and meets Level AA Accessibility to ensure people using assistive technologies can easily navigate Submittable's pages and forms.

If you are unable to use Submittable or would like to send us your submission in an alternative way, please reach out to us at least one week prior to the deadline for assistance.

MRAC works to ensure that written information, instructions, and workshop presentations are created with accessibility principles in mind. Additionally, we are happy to provide materials in Braille, Large Print, or other formats with advanced notice that varies according to format, from one week to on-demand, but even if the notice timeline has elapsed, we may still be able to accommodate the request.

Contact us as early as possible to begin a conversation about how to make sure you have an equal opportunity to be considered.

Language Access

These instructions are translated in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong and available on the MRAC website. With advance notice, MRAC can also contract an interpreter and/or translator to assist with the process.

Artists may submit their letter/video/audio file in any language and MRAC will work with interpreters/translators as needed.

Contacts

For questions about the submission process in general and technical assistance, please contact us at mrac@mrac.org or 651-645-0402.

Questions and assistance related to eligibility and/or preparing a submission:

Please contact Jovan Rebollar (jovan@mrac.org or 651-523-6381).

Or, visit the Artists' Futures program page and fill out the meeting request form to schedule a time to meet with a staff member who can assist you. The assistance form will be available starting on August 15, 2022.

Please do your best to read these instructions thoroughly before reaching out with questions.

MRAC Artists' Futures Glossary

Artist - A creative individual who regularly generates or creates new work using conventional and/or non-conventional creative expressive forms. This includes, but is not limited to individuals using visual, performance, musical, theatrical, audio, literary, and/or sculptural forms. (Throughout this document we use the term "artist" to refer to both artists and [culture bearers](#))

Artistic Discipline - A category of creative study, knowledge and/or expertise.

Artistic Practice - Ways in which an artist goes about creating and conceptualizing their work. This includes but is not limited to physical activities of making, engaging ideas, working with materials, tools and applying creative skills.

Cohort - We define cohort as a select group of people that intend to share knowledge and experiences during the program period.

Culture bearer - For the purposes of the Artists' Futures program MRAC adopted [McKnight Foundation](#)'s definition of "culture bearers" as "creative leaders in Minnesota from cultures that don't use the word artist (such as Native American and Hmong), as well as those who center the transmission and preservation of cultural lifeways." (Throughout this document we use the term "artist" to refer to both artists and culture bearers.)

Groupings - The Artists' Futures program was developed for and by a diverse group of artists and cultural leaders who are members of the artist communities this program intends to serve. A group of 11 advisors along with MRAC staff engaged with artists across backgrounds, experiences and cultures in several intimate focus groups and one-on-one meetings, engaging nearly 100 individuals. The responses shared during focus groups directly informed the design of Artists' Futures. Informed by this engagement, the Groupings represent people identified as facing complex and historical barriers in accessing resources and financial support, while also honoring the voices that shared their knowledge, challenges, and experiences that contributed to our learning and growth.

Professional Development - Continuing education or training opportunities or services to help develop new skills, stay up-to-date on current practices, and advance one's artistic career.

Unrestricted - This term is used to describe money that can be used for any purpose. For example, the Artists' Futures' \$35,000 award does not need to be spent on arts or program related activities. It may be spent on anything the recipient decides (i.e. rent, groceries, travel, research, art, health care, self-care, debt, etc.).