

Next Step Fund Panel Rating Guide

Program Purpose

The Next Step Fund grant is designed to help artists complete a project focused on their individual artistic and/or professional development goals within an artistic discipline. Projects should outline strategies that will help the artist overcome barriers to success, sustain the continued success of their artistic career, and/or help them leverage an opportunity.

The Next Step Fund is made possible with support from the McKnight Foundation and provides project grants up to \$5,000 to artists in any arts discipline. Applicants may be at any stage in their career, but must be able to provide work samples of their own artwork. Individual artists must have a primary residential address in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, or Washington county.

Rating Criteria

Criteria are the lens through which panelists are asked to focus their review. MRAC believes that stronger applications demonstrate that an individual has clear goals, an effective project design unique to their career goals, and a body of creative works that help illuminate the artist's creative vision and passions. The review criteria for the Next Step Fund are **Artist & Goals** and **Project Design**. A highly rated application will clearly demonstrate how each criterion aligns with the other, giving a clear and convincing view of who the artist is, what they create, their art career/professional development goals, and their plan to make moves toward achieving their goals.

Program Values

MRAC values artists at every stage in their development and in any artistic discipline. Next Step Fund is designed for artists to propose a plan that has the potential to help them overcome a barrier to success or leverage an opportunity that could benefit their art career. Proposed projects will range from ambitious plans that propel an artist's career forward, to projects designed to maintain an artist's ability to create. We value both ends of this spectrum and everything in between. Most importantly, projects should be right-fitted to the career stage of the applicant, and in alignment with their stated goals.

Application Rating Instructions

Panelists will score each criterion, Artist & Goals and Project Design, with a total maximum score of 30 points (up to 15 in each criterion). Panelists will refer to The Artist section of the application and the Work Samples to determine a score for Artist & Goals.

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Panelists will refer to The Project section of the application and the Budget to determine a score for Project Design.

Rating Applications

Listed below, under each criterion, are the categories panelists will score. Panelists will rate each category with 1 – 5 points. The highest score an applicant can get in each section is 15 points, and 30 points overall.

Artist & Goals

Each category should reflect details given by the applicant in response to the questions/prompts in The Artist section of the application. Rate how well the applicant described their artistic vision and professional goals related to their artistic practice. The body of work, shared in their work samples and past career accomplishments should align with and embody the details that they described in the Artist section of their application. Work samples are not scored independently. They are submitted to provide context and bring to life the responses the applicants gave in The Artist section of their application. Work samples should provide panelists with examples of ways in which they have explored creating work that expresses their artistic vision and how their work reflects where they are in their artistic career.

Body of Work (5 pts)

The work samples clearly depict the applicant's artistic discipline and creative process. The artistic discipline(s), art form(s) explored, and stage of artistic development that were described in The Artist section of the proposal are consistent with the work sample representations provided. The work samples show artistic potential and dedication to a creative practice.

1 2 3 4 5

Artistic Vision (5 pts)

The Artist section clearly defines the applicant's artistic vision, creative process, and accomplishments unique to the artist.

1 2 3 4 5

Artistic Goals (5 pts)

The Artist section clearly and convincingly states artistic goals that are in alignment with the artist's career stage. The artist's responses clearly identified opportunities or outlined a strategy to reach their stated goals, and how this grant opportunity will help them do that.

1 2 3 4 5

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Artist & Goals Score _____ out of 15

Project Design

Each category should reflect details given by the applicant in response to the questions/prompts in The Project section and Budget of the application. Rate how well the applicant described the project for which they are seeking funding. Applicants should have provided specific information related to their plan. Applicants should have made a strong connection between their proposed project and their unique needs as an artist. Stronger projects are those that support the artist's stated goals outlined in the Artist section.

Project Idea (5 pts)

The proposed project is a compelling response to the unique goals of the Artist, as outlined in The Artist section. The project is appropriate and timely for where they currently are in their art career.

1 2 3 4 5

Project Goals (5 pts)

The proposed project aligns with the artist's stated career goals, and shows a clear plan to move toward achieving their goals. The proposed project will help the artist overcome a barrier to success or leverage an opportunity to help maintain or advance the artist's career.

1 2 3 4 5

Feasibility (5 pts)

The budget and timeline (if applicable) is thoughtful and will allow the artist to successfully complete the project.

1 2 3 4 5

Project Design Score _____ out of 15

ARTIST & GOALS + PROJECT DESIGN = TOTAL SCORE _____ out of 30