

# Flexible Support Review Panel Orientation

April 2026

# During the meeting...

- Keep your microphone muted unless asked to unmute.
- If your connection is choppy, turn off your video.
- Live automated captioning is available by clicking the CC button at the bottom of the screen.
- Please use the chat feature to ask questions at any time!

# Staff Contacts

Aimee

**Aimee Kuiper** (she/her)  
Engagement Manager  
aimee@mrac.org  
651-523-6388

**Zola Dee** (she/her)  
Program Officer  
zola@mrac.org  
651-523-6389

**Masami Kawazato** (she/her)  
Program Director  
masami@mrac.org  
651-523-6386

**Pablo Siqueiros** (he/him)  
Program Officer  
pablo@mrac.org  
651-523-6380

**Ryan Werdon** (he/him)  
Program Officer  
ryan@mrac.org  
651-523-6384

# Meeting Agenda

Aimee

1. Review Panelist Role
2. State Arts Funding
3. Flexible Support Overview
4. Scoring the Apps
5. Using Submittable
6. Panelists Tips and Resources
7. Scoring Practice

# Review Panelist Role

What you bring to your review panel experience:

- Your passion for art and community
- Your commitment to public service
- Your time—there is no in-person or virtual live meeting

# Review Panelist Role

What you'll take away:

- A rewarding experience, helping your community and supporting the arts
- A stipend to thank you for your service
- Reimbursement for caregiver expenses related to participation, covering up to 10 hours for childcare or 20 hours for personal care assistant.

# Review Panelist Role

Aimee

**Save the date!**

Deadline:  
**May 8, 2026**

- Your final scores are **due by 11:59 pm.**
- Budget your time accordingly: each application can take 30 minutes–1 hour for a complete review.
- 27 applications takes about 12–25 hours or 3–6 hours per week.

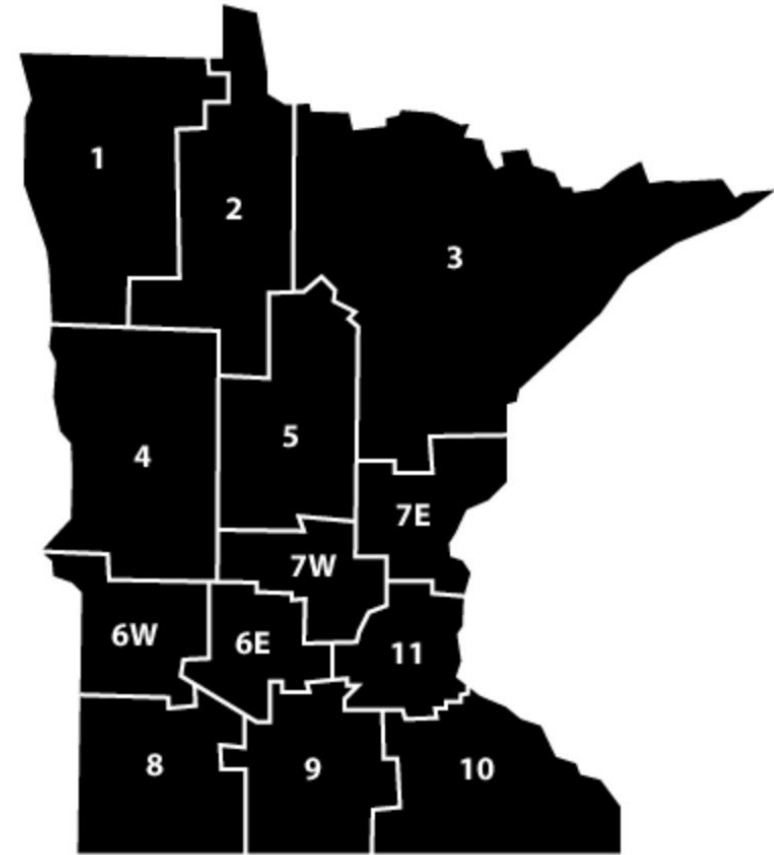
# Review Panelist Role

A note on accessibility:

If you'd like to use other means to review applications, please reach out to Aimee ([aimee@mrac.org](mailto:aimee@mrac.org)) to start a conversation.

# State Arts Funding in Minnesota

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# MRAC's Mission

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**metro**  
regional  
**arts**  
council

The Metropolitan Regional Arts Council improves **arts access** for **communities** in the seven-county metropolitan area through support to artists and organizations.



# Arts Access Discussion

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What events have you been to that have granted arts access to Minnesotans?



# Flexible Support: Up to Today

What has happened in the Flexible Support application process so far?

- Opened for applications January 5
- Program team provided support Jan 5–Feb 13
- Flexible Support closed for applications Feb 17
- Program team reviewed applications for eligibility Feb 18–Mar 30
- All grants in panel review are **fully eligible**

# Flexible Support: Program Purpose

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The Flexible Support grant provides funding to help organizations/groups create and sustain Minnesotans' **access to the arts.**

# Flexible Support: Types of Orgs

The Flexible Support grant provides funding to help organizations/groups create and sustain Minnesotans' **access to the arts**.

Both arts and non-arts orgs are eligible to apply for Flexible Support.

# Flexible Support: Funding Requests

There are two broad categories for eligible expenses:

- Operations and/or organizational capacity
- Funding for arts programming or the purchase of arts supplies.

# Flexible Support: Proposal Narrative

For each application narrative, you'll review:

- Leadership List (for determining COIs)
- Proposal title
- About Your Organization and Experience
- Proposal Goals and Activities
- Arts Access
- Venues/timeline

# Flexible Support: Narrative Specifics

## About Your Organization and Experience

Applicants have answered the following questions:

1. What is your organization/group's mission or overall goals?
2. What audiences or communities do you typically serve?
3. What experience does your organization/group and/or staff have in creating arts access for Minnesotans?

# Flexible Support: Narrative Specifics

## Proposal Goals and Activities

Applicants have answered the following questions:

4. What are the primary goals of the proposal?
5. What specific activities will you undertake with this grant funding?
6. How do these activities meet the goals stated in question 4?

# Flexible Support: Narrative Specifics

## Arts Access

Applicants have answered the following questions:

7. How will this proposal create (or contribute to your capacity to create) meaningful access to the arts for Minnesotans?
8. Who are the participants or communities that will be served by your proposal?
9. How will this proposal respond to the specific needs or interests of the participants or communities?

# Flexible Support: Proposal Budget

Each application will include:

- Budget Plan Spreadsheet
- Additional Funding Sources question (MSAB requirement)

# Question Time!

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# Scoring the Applications: Intro

## Three Criteria

- Proposal Design
- Arts Access
- Proposal Feasibility

# Scoring the Applications: Intro

## Numerical Scores

- Assess and provide each application a numerical score for the each of 3 criteria.
- Each criteria gives you 2 questions to use when you assess that aspect of the application.



6 = outstanding

5 = great

4 = good

3 = average

2 = poor

1 = does not meet  
requirements

# Scoring the Applications: Intro

## Summary Comments

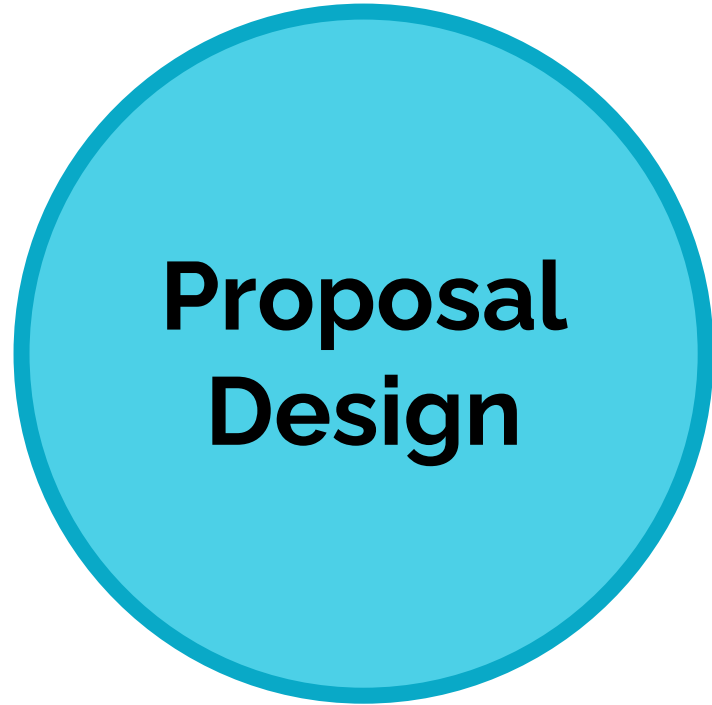
- For each criterion, select two comments to reflect your score.
- One comment for each of the two questions within the criterion.

# Scoring the Applications: Intro

## Personal Comment

- For each criterion, write a few sentences with your observations on the content of the application, strengths and weakness, etc.

# Scoring the Apps: Proposal Design



Questions for evaluation:

1. Are proposal details clearly and adequately explained?
2. Do the proposal plans directly contribute to the goals or mission of the organization/group?

Look at:

**About Your  
Organization and  
Experience**

and

**Proposal Goals and  
Activities**

1 2 3 4 5 6



# Scoring the App: Proposal Design



Proposal  
Design

Summary  
Comment  
Options:

Are proposal  
details clearly  
and adequately  
explained?

- (6) Proposal plan is *tightly coherent* with *rigorously considered* details.
- (5) Proposal plan is *organized* with *thoroughly considered* details.
- (4) Proposal plan is *solid*, and details are *well considered*.
- (3) Proposal plan is *generalized*, and details are *mostly considered*.
- (2) Proposal plan is *vague*, and details are *only loosely considered*.
- (1) There is *no clear* proposal plan, and the details are *not considered*.



Proposal  
Design

Summary  
Comment  
Options:

**Do the proposal plans directly contribute to the goals or mission of the organization/group?**

# Scoring the App: Proposal Design

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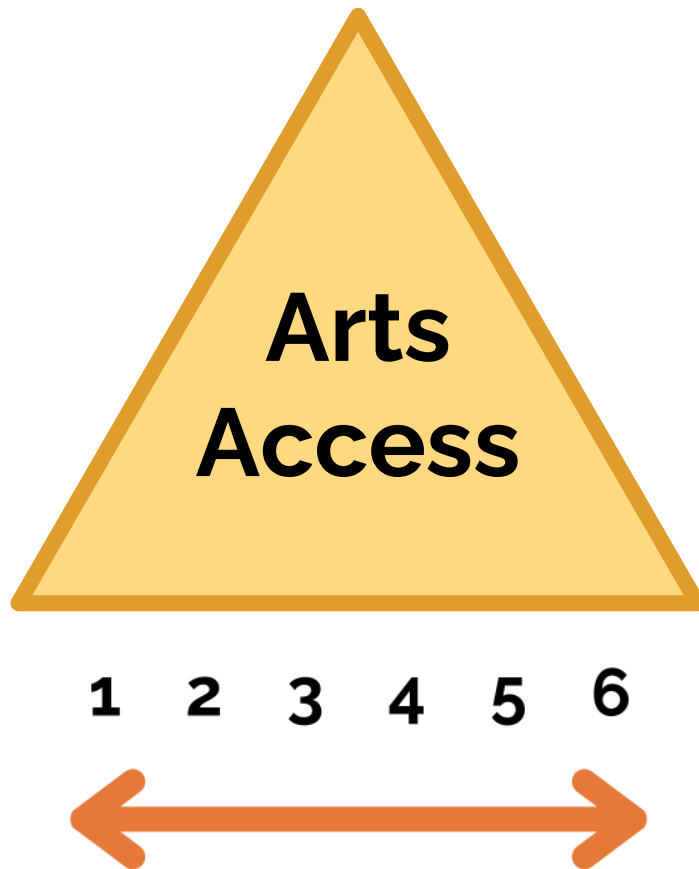
- (6) Organization's goals or mission are *definitively described*, and it is *precisely demonstrated* how the specific proposal will support them.
- (5) Organization's goals or mission are *carefully described*, and it is *directly demonstrated* how the specific proposal will support them.
- (4) Organization's goals or mission are *broadly described*, and it is *reasonably demonstrated* how the proposal will support them.
- (3) Organization's goals or mission are *acceptably described*, and it is *passably demonstrated* how the proposal will support them.
- (2) Organization's goals or mission are *imprecisely described*, and it is *ambiguously demonstrated* how the proposal will support them.
- (1) Organization's goals or mission are *not described*, and it is *not demonstrated* how the proposal will support them.

# Scoring the Apps: Arts Access

Questions:

1. Do proposal plans clearly and thoroughly demonstrate how they will create (or contribute to the organization's capacity to create) arts access for Minnesotans?
2. Do proposal plans adequately demonstrate responsiveness to the specific needs or interests of participants?

Look at: **Proposal Goals** and **Activities** and **Art Access**



# Scoring the Apps: Proposal Feasibility

## Proposal Feasibility

1 2 3 4 5 6



Questions:

1. Is the organization/ group well positioned to complete the proposal successfully?
2. Does the funding request reasonably consider costs and timely completion of the proposal activities?

Look at:

**About Your  
Organization and  
Experience**

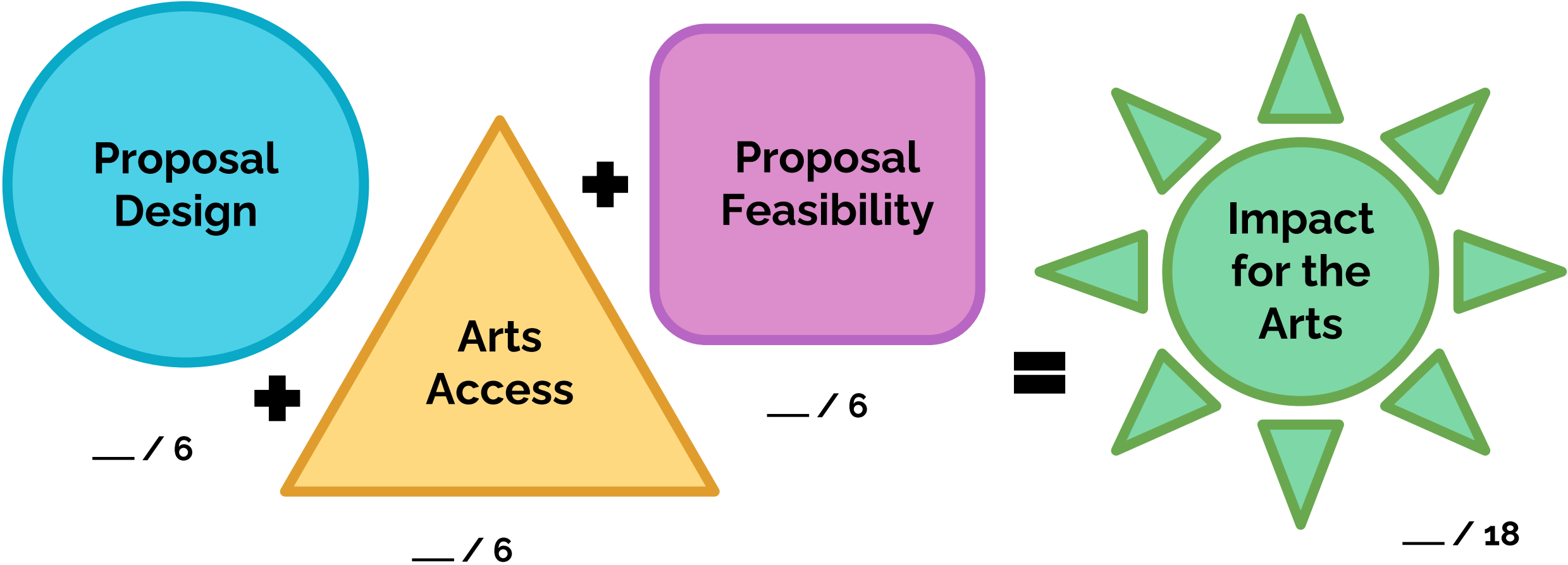
and

**Budget Plan  
Spreadsheet**

and

**Proposal timeline**

# Scoring the Apps: Bringing It Together



# Scoring the Apps: Review Tips

- Quick reference guide available
- Use the entire 1–6 scale
- Score for content, not writing style or technique
- You can save and come back to a review later
- Review each application independently
- Summary comments should logically reflect your overall score

# Question Time!

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# Using Submittable to Score

Aimee



Submittable

# Using Submittable: Evaluate Confidently

Aimee

- Confidentiality
- Independent evaluations
- Consider only what is shown in the application
- Consider your preferences/biases
- App content vs. Outside knowledge
- Finding your timing & groove
- Additional information may be provided

# Using Submittable: Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest include **you** (the reviewer) and **direct family members**

Potential conflicts of interest:

- Direct financial benefits
- Service on boards or committees
- Service (paid or not) as an employee/consultant
- Familial relationships with applicant staff or board
- Other personal benefits (such as free tickets)
- Any other potential appearance of conflict

# Using Submittable: Panel Prep Page

Aimee

- Panel policies
- Panel scoring guide
- Reimbursement form
- Program guidelines
- This orientation video and orientation slides as PDF

[mrac.org/panel-prep](https://mrac.org/panel-prep)

# Question Time!

Aimee



# Let's Practice!

# Example: Statement One

Art for Youth will lead a series of four free workshops on the fundamentals of painting, designed for kids age 8–14. Funds will be used to pay for studio space to host the workshops, supplies and materials, and to hire an ASL interpreter (in response to multiple requests from Deaf/HoH participants). Our studio space is located near a couple of schools, so our workshops will happen in the afternoons once school is out. Parents and caretakers are always invited and welcome to participate.

# Example: Statement Two

Minnesota Opera Collective will host a big outdoor event and reception this spring that makes everyone feel welcome at the opera. The park where we will host the event has an amphitheater and the audience will sit and enjoy the spring blooms on the open lawn. The farmer's almanac says there will be little chance of rain that day, so we do not need to reserve a contingency indoor space. Also, the park managers assured us the stage has great acoustics. By not spending upwards of \$10,000 on a sound system and contingency space, this will allow us to host a private reception at a donor's home in their backyard (we will ask them after receiving the funds) following the event with amazing catering and entertainment.

**Thank you!**