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## RISCA ARTS ACCESS GRANT GUIDELINES

RISCA's [Arts Access Grant \(AAG\)](#) program provides program support (maximum of \$3,000) to new ventures or occasional arts programs executed by non-profit organizations, or groups fiscally sponsored by a non-profit organization. Eligible programs should contribute to the vitality of our communities, the economy of our state, the arts education of Rhode Islanders, and our quality of life. Programs must demonstrate excellent artistic, educational, and cultural value, as well as engagement with and relevance to their community.

If an organization is not a non-profit, it may apply through a fiscal sponsor – see **Fiscal Sponsorship** section for more details. Organizations that receive grants in the Investments in Arts & Culture program are not eligible to be applicants in the AAG category, or in our Project Grants for Individuals, Education, or Health categories for their own programming. They may, however, serve as a fiscal sponsor to applications within AAG and other project grant categories.

Organizations seeking AAG support will apply online at <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=artsri>.

Potential applicants are highly encouraged to speak with RISCA staff ahead of submitting an application. Please contact Todd Trebour, Organizations Program Director, at 401-222-3882 or [todd.trebour@arts.ri.gov](mailto:todd.trebour@arts.ri.gov) to discuss your project.

### Deadlines

The deadline to apply for Arts Access Grants is 11:59 pm on:

- April 1 (for grant activities between July 1 and June 30)
- October 1 (for grant activities between January 1 and June 30)

In the event that a deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the revised deadline will be 11:59 pm on the next business day. Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

### Eligibility

Grantees in RISCA's Investments in Arts & Culture (IAC) program are not eligible to apply for AAG support, but they may serve as fiscal sponsors for organizations applying in the AAG category.

In order to qualify for AAG support, you must be:

- **A non-profit organization.** Your organization must be incorporated in and conducting business in the State of Rhode Island, with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service, registered with the Rhode Island Secretary of State, governed by a revolving board of directors, trustees or advisory board drawn from the community at large and shown to be actively involved in the governance of the organization (for confirmation that your nonprofit organization is incorporated in the State of Rhode Island, visit the Secretary of State's [online database](#))

If your organization is incorporated in a state outside of Rhode Island, they may still apply for a grant. The organization must show that its principal place of business is in Rhode Island, it is registered with the Secretary of State's office, it is producing programming predominantly in Rhode Island, and it is governed by a revolving board of directors, trustees or advisory board drawn from the Rhode Island community and shown to be actively involved in the governance of the organization. Please contact Todd Trebour, Organizations Program Director for more information.

- **A non-exempt, Rhode Island-based organization using a fiscal sponsor that fits the above requirements** (see **Fiscal Sponsorship** section).

In order for your project to be considered eligible in AAG:

- **Your project budget must indicate a 1:1 cash match for requested RISCA funds.** AAG requires a minimum 1:1 cash match for organizational applicants, meaning that applicants may request up to half the cost of the project, to a maximum of \$3,000. This cash match can be from projected earned revenue (e.g. ticket sales); pledged or confirmed donations; pending, projected, or confirmed grants or cash business sponsorships; or cash on hand that the applicant has to put towards a project. *In-kind contributions may not be applied to the match requirement in AAG, but they can be incorporated into grant budgets to reflect community support.*

Applications that do not meet the cash match requirement will be deemed ineligible.

## **Fiscal Sponsorship**

*Organizations that do not have a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service may be sponsored by an eligible nonprofit organization.* In this case, the application must be submitted in the name of the sponsor organization. If a grant is awarded, it is understood that the sponsor organization is financially, administratively, and programmatically responsible for all conditions of the grant. The sponsor is also responsible for signing any grant documents, achieving compliance, and ensuring the submission of final report form.

*Organizations that are interested in using a fiscal sponsor for an Arts Access Grant must contact Todd Trebour, Organizations Program Director, prior to beginning an application for approval and to request a grant profile that links the organization to the fiscal sponsor.*

When submitting a grant via a fiscal sponsor, a simple letter of agreement must be provided. This [fiscal sponsorship letter](#) may be used as a template. Typically, fiscal sponsors will charge an administrative fee ranging from 0-10% for administering grants depending on the degree of administrative support and bookkeeping they provide; this fee can be factored into your grant budget.

Divisions, branches, departments, programs, or other subunits of nonprofit corporations, colleges, or universities are ineligible to apply on their own; applications may be submitted only by the parent corporation.

Parent corporations and fiscal sponsors may be grantees or applicants in AAG and other RISCA grant programs, including the Investments in Arts and Culture program.

## Funding Considerations

The following conditions for funding apply to all AAG applicants:

- **The maximum grant award in this category is \$3,000.** Be aware that grants are frequently awarded at less than the requested amount.
- **Only one application per grant deadline - except if an organization is also a fiscal sponsor.** Organizations may only submit one application per grant deadline to RISCA for AAG support. However, they may function as a fiscal sponsor to other organizations within the same grant program. Please note: a fiscal sponsor may not serve as a program partner on a sponsored application.
- **If you receive a grant, you must credit RISCA on all marketing materials.** Grants awarded by RISCA are provided by the Rhode Island State General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, on behalf of the citizens of Rhode Island. For that reason, grant recipients must credit RISCA on all printed material where funders and supporters are listed and on all printed programs (see **Grant Award Requirements** below for details).
- **All RISCA grant awards are contingent upon the availability of funds from the Rhode Island State General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts.** For example, any delays in passing the state budget will affect the timing of your grant payments being processed.
- **Grant applications are considered on a competitive basis.** No applicant is guaranteed funding at any level, even if all basic criteria have been met.

## What RISCA will and will not fund

Council support may be used for expenses related to arts programming and production of a single event or a series of events, such as the production, presentation, marketing, and for reasonable administrative expenses necessary for carrying out the project. Council support may not be used for:

- **Capital projects.** Bricks and mortar activities and capital improvements, or for the purchase of permanent equipment.

- **Addressing Debt.** Eliminating or reducing existing debt, or for contributions to an endowment fund.
- **Fundraising.** Any development efforts, such as social events or benefits.
- **Prizes and awards.** Note: your project having an award or competition component does not make the project ineligible; RISCA funds just may not be used for the prize or award.
- **Hospitality expenses.** This includes food and beverages for openings or receptions. Under no circumstances will the purchase of alcoholic beverages be supported. Note: your project can have hospitality expenses; RISCA funds just may not be used for hospitality expenses.
- **Expenses outside of award period.** Expenses incurred or activities occurring prior to July 1 or after June 30 in the fiscal year in which the grant has been awarded.
- **Regranting funds.** Applications where the purpose is to “regrant” or award funds using some or all of the RISCA grant funds.
- **Undergraduate or graduate school activities.** Activities which are part of a graduate or undergraduate degree program, or for which academic credit is received.
- **Religious activities.** Applications for projects that proselytize or promote religious activities, or which take place as part of a religious service.
- **Private functions, or programs that are not ADA compliant.** Performances and exhibitions not available to the general public, or which are inaccessible to people with disabilities.

## Review Process

Once the application deadlines passes, no alterations or additions may be made to your application. Applications are reviewed by a peer panel based on the contents of your application only.

- **Review of applications by RISCA staff.** RISCA staff reviews each application for compliance with eligibility and submission requirements. If RISCA staff detects issues, they may call upon applicants or grantees to furnish proof of their eligibility.
- **Review of grant applications by panel.** A panel consisting of five Rhode Island residents – chosen for their involvement in the arts community and in a variety of art disciplines – reviews, scores, and takes notes on each application based on review criteria online prior to an in-person panel review.
- **In-person panel review.** The panel then meets in person at RISCA offices to discuss each application, adjust their scores based on their conversation as a panel, and make funding recommendations.

- **Council review of panel recommendations.** The panel's recommendations are presented for approval to the Governor-appointed Council which oversees RISCA.
- **Notification of grant awards.** Notifications will be made *approximately* 3 months after the application deadline. Be aware that there is no guarantee that the process will move according to this schedule, as RISCA's grant awards are dependent on both federal and state funding.

Once a grant has been awarded, applicants should understand that the grant processing procedure is lengthy. In many cases, grant funds may not be received prior to the start of a project. Applicants should be aware of this possibility and plan their cash flow accordingly.

## Review Criteria

The peer panels will evaluate the application material based on the following review criteria:

### *Artistic Merit (50%)*

- Evidence of artistic excellence and the ability to provide quality experiences for audiences/participants.
- Project has relevance to the creative experience and/or cultural heritage of a community.
- Support materials are directly relevant to the application, of excellent quality, and present a high level of artistic product.

### *Clarity and Achievability (25%)*

- The application clearly states:
  - what will be done.
  - when and where things will take place.
  - why the project should be supported with public funds.
  - how the applicant will go about organizing, managing and evaluating the project.
- Budgets are clear, detailed, and accurate; the planned allocation of funds supports project goals.
- There is evidence that what is proposed is achievable by the applicant, on their own or in partnership with others. In the absence of past experience, information is provided that helps make a convincing case that this project will succeed.

### *Public Value (25%)*

The project must be directly engaged with Rhode Islanders in one or more of the following ways:

- Creating opportunities for all Rhode Island residents to participate in the arts.
- Encouraging access to and participation in the arts by:
  - Persons in under-resourced geographic communities.
  - Underrepresented populations, including race, gender, sexuality, and disability.
- Creating, building, or growing partnerships with and between artists, community members, arts nonprofits, and community organizations.

## Access for People with Disabilities

Applicants who need assistance completing an application and/or require an interpreter should contact RISCA well in advance of the deadline. **LARGE PRINT GUIDELINES ARE**

AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

Persons with disabilities have the right to access all RISCA-funded programs. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states, in part, that “no otherwise qualified person with a disability ... shall solely by reason of their disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all programs and facilities meet or exceed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, and are accessible to all. Rhode Island arts facilities, and the managers of arts projects in Rhode Island, must make their programs as accessible as possible to the widest number of people and work to remove barriers that may block accessibility. This includes addressing the structural, programmatic, communication and attitudinal barriers that keep people with disabilities from fully participating in arts programs. See <https://www.arts.gov/accessibility/accessibility-resources/publications-checklists/accessibility-planning-and-resource> for more information.

If your facilities do not meet any one of the standards of the ADA, you are not in compliance and may be ineligible for RISCA funding.

### **How to Apply**

Applicants must submit a completed AAG application form online via <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=artsri>, including the following attachments:

- Project Budget, on the form provided in the application.
- Organizational Budget, in your own format.
- Most recent IRS form 990.
- Letter of determination for 501c3 tax-exempt status from the IRS.
- Letter from fiscal sponsor, if applicable.
- One copy of a Board of directors list, including names, professional/cultural affiliations, expiration of terms, years on board.
- Support Materials (see below).

For any questions regarding the form or attachments, contact Todd Trebour, Organizations Program Director, at 401-222-3882 or [todd.trebouri@arts.ri.gov](mailto:todd.trebouri@arts.ri.gov).

A guide to the Arts Access grant application questions can be found at <https://risca.online/grants/arts-access-grant/>

### **Support Materials**

Since applications will be reviewed and scored by panelists on their own, outside of RISCA offices, all support material must be included in the online application.

If your application deals with the work of a particular artist or artists, please provide audio samples, video samples, or digital images of that artist’s work, whichever is applicable. These

may be uploaded directly to the application form, or you may copy and paste to the appropriate material in the support materials box.

Other suggested support materials for your organization/project include:

- Brochures, postcards, catalogs and other mailings.
- Select press and publicity.
- Resumes/CVs of lead artists and/or staff.
- Sample publications.
- Letters of support.

You are not required to upload material in all five boxes, though a variety of materials is encouraged in order to illustrate the strengths of your project to the review panel.

In the text box provided for each item, please include a brief description (e.g. in the case of artist work, list the title, medium, dimensions, year of completion, duration, etc.). Please limit audio and video clips to no more than 2 minutes. (If a sample is longer than two minutes, please indicate start and end times for the clip you would like the panel to review.)

PLEASE NOTE: The online system can accommodate images, text documents, video, and audio in most formats, however *there is a 25 MB limit for ALL support materials combined*. We recommend that video be uploaded to a site such as Vimeo or YouTube, and links provided in an uploaded document. If you have any questions, contact Todd Trebour, Organizations Program Director, at 401-222-3882 or [todd.trebour@arts.ri.gov](mailto:todd.trebour@arts.ri.gov).

## Grant Award Requirements

- **You must acknowledge RISCA support** in a prominent manner in all materials and announcements, both audio and visual, related to the grant program. Grant recipients must also display, in a prominent manner, the RISCA logo in association with that acknowledgment. Further detail regarding acknowledgement can be found at <https://risca.online/grants/public-acknowledgement/>.
- **You must submit a final grant report to RISCA via the online grant system.** All grantees are required to submit a final report online detailing their grant-related activities no later than the July 31 following the grant cycle. You will not be able to apply for another RISCA grant if you have an overdue final report.
- **You must keep records of receipts and expenditures related to the funded activity.** Be prepared to make your records available to RISCA if requested by RISCA. All grantees are subject to periodic audit or review by RISCA or the State of Rhode Island and must retain fiscal records for a period of seven (7) years following the grant period.
- **You must notify RISCA of any significant changes in your project and/or organizational leadership.** Any changes must be reported to RISCA within two (2) months of the change.
- **The grant must be used exclusively for the purposes specified in the Grant Agreement.** Any alternative use of funds must be authorized in advance in writing by RISCA, or the grant funds must be returned.
- **RISCA reserves the right to use any submitted materials for promotional purposes.** This includes any text, photographs, audio, or video submitted as part of

funded grant applications for limited non-commercial educational or promotional use in publications or other media produced, used or contracted by RISCA including, but not limited to: brochures, invitations, newsletters, postcards, websites, etc.

### **Benefits for Grantees**

- **RISCA wants to help promote your project!** If your project includes a public event, submit information about your event to RISCA via this Event and Publicity Submission Form: <https://goo.gl/forms/zT1jDLShn2NVEfIX2>. This will allow RISCA to post and promote your event via RISCA's social media platforms and (possibly) email newsletter. Also, if you get any press or accolades for your project or organization, you can submit information via the Submission Form as well.
- **RISCA wants to support you in this – and future! – projects.** If you have any questions about your grant, or your panel comments, please feel free to reach out to RISCA staff. If you run into any issues in executing your project, please also feel free to reach out to RISCA staff. We want you to succeed – and we know things happen. We can help you troubleshoot and come up with solutions