



Rhode Island State Council on the Arts
http://www.arts.ri.gov
One Capitol Hill, 3rd Floor
Providence, RI 02908-5803
Phone 401-222-3880
Fax 401-222-3018
TTY 401-222-7808

RISCA INVESTMENTS IN ARTS & CULTURE GRANT GUIDELINES

RISCA's Investments in Arts & Culture Program (IAC) provides annual operating support to arts and culture organizations across Rhode Island that make important contributions to the vitality of our communities, the economy of our state, the enrichment of all Rhode Islanders, and our quality of life. Organizations must demonstrate excellent artistic, educational, and cultural value; responsiveness and engagement with their community; and a high level of financial and managerial accountability, including a history of support from RISCA.

The IAC program does not accept unsolicited proposals. The application is open by invitation only to pre-approved organizations. If you are unsure whether you qualify for IAC, contact Todd Trebour, Organizations Program Director, at todd.trebour@arts.ri.gov or 401-222-3882.

Deadline

The deadline to apply for Investments in Arts & Culture is 11:59 PM on April 1.

Once organizations have been accepted into IAC, they will submit a full application once every four years according to a schedule based on organizational budget size. Applicants are grouped by budget size, since organizations with similar sized operating budgets share more organizational characteristics.

- Budgets over \$500,000 – applies FY21, deadline April 1, 2020
- Budgets from \$100,000 to \$500,000 – applies FY23, deadline April 1, 2022
- Budgets under \$100,000 – applies FY24, deadline April 1, 2023

In the event that the April 1 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, without exception.

Annually, IAC organizations will be required to file a final report detailing the activities over their last completed fiscal year. This material acts as both the final report for the previous fiscal year and as the "application" for the coming fiscal year. (The State of Rhode Island's fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30).

New applicants into the IAC category will submit a full application upon invitation, regardless of their budget size and when the rest of their budget cohort is scheduled to be evaluated. After that they will submit a full application when their budget cohort is up for review.

Eligibility criteria

In order to qualify for the IAC program, you must:

- Be invited by RISCA staff to submit an application.
- Be a nonprofit organization, incorporated and physically located in the State of Rhode Island with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. The nonprofit must have articles of incorporation on file and currently registered with the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Office, OR a subdivision of government with appropriate legal status. (For confirmation that your nonprofit organization is incorporated in the State of Rhode Island, visit the Secretary of State's [online database](#)).
- Have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), a DUNS number, and have received federal tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- Maintain arts and culture as a central part of your organizational mission.
- Be in continuous operation and exhibiting or producing arts programming for each year of the past five years.
- Have received three consecutive years of RISCA [Arts Access](#) OR [Project Grant in Education](#) support for your arts programming.

RISCA may require written documentation that each of these eligibility requirements has been met before funds are awarded in this grant category.

Organizations that do not qualify under these eligibility criteria may be eligible to apply for support through RISCA's [Arts Access](#) grant program.

Requirements of ongoing participation

In addition to meeting the above eligibility criteria, an organization that has been invited to apply to the IAC program must maintain panel scores of 75 or above for ongoing participation.

Substantive changes to an organization's mission, scope of programming, or organizational structure may necessitate separate review by RISCA staff to determine ongoing eligibility.

Funding considerations

The following conditions for funding apply to all new IAC applicants:

IAC applicants will not request specific grant amounts. Rather, grants in the IAC category will be awarded based upon:

- the ranking of your application as determined by an independent review panel.
- the amount of your previous RISCA grant awards through Arts Access and/or Project Grants in Education.
- the amount of funds allocated for organizational support by the Council.

Other funding considerations:

- **IAC grantees are ineligible to apply for or receive funding from any other RISCA grant program.** All applicants, however, are encouraged to collaborate as partners on other RISCA-funded projects where non-IAC organizations may be lead applicants.

- **IAC grantees may function as fiscal sponsors for organizations within other grant programs, as long as they are not program partners in the sponsored projects.** The most common program where we see fiscal sponsorship is the Arts Access Grant program, but fiscal sponsorship is also possible in the Project Grants for Education and Project Grants in Healthcare grant programs.
- **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, even if all basic criteria have been met.
- **All grantees are subject to periodic audit or review by RISCA or the State of Rhode Island.** Grantees must retain fiscal records for a period of seven (7) years following completion of the grant period.

What RISCA will and will not fund

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 complaint.** Performances and exhibitions not available to the general public, or which are inaccessible to people with disabilities.

Review process

Once the application deadline 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 individuals from inside and outside of Rhode Island – chosen for their experience managing arts and culture organizations and expertise in the field – 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, and adjust their scores based on their conversation as a panel. *Applicants will have the ability to call in and listen to the panel discuss their application.*
- **Funding recommendations.** Funding recommendations are made to the panel by RISCA staff based on the identified criteria in **Funding Considerations**.
- **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, and after the state budget has been passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor. 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.
- Organization 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%)

- Financial stability and integrity, as demonstrated by financial documents.
- Staffing and systems commensurate with the budget size of the organization.
- Evidence of plan for operating into the future, as demonstrated by support materials and evaluation & planning methods
- Clear history of successfully executed programming.
- Demonstration of a sound process, leadership, and thinking in negotiating challenges.
- Operational and programmatic partnerships illustrating relevance of organization to its community.

Public Value (25%)

- Demonstrated effectiveness in connecting with community served, illustrated by:
 - a well-articulated definition of target participants/audiences.
 - a record of proactive and responsive engagement activities.
 - efforts to engage with underrepresented audiences.
 - data attesting to audience impact of organization's programming.
- Effective promotion of organization's programs through a variety of marketing platforms, guided by audience preference and evaluative efforts.
- Ensuring – and clearly communicating – the accessibility of organization's work to people of all abilities.

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 IAC application form via <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=artsri>. Organizations up for reapplication or invited organizations for first-time application will be provided with instructions on how to access the IAC application once logged in. Application must include the following attachments:

- Letter of determination for 501c3 tax-exempt status from the IRS.
- Most recent IRS form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N.
- Organizational Budget Actuals for your most recently completed fiscal year, on the form provided in the application.
- Board-approved Organizational Budget for your current fiscal year, on the form provided in the application.
- Current list of staff and board members.
- Work samples and other 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.

A guide to the IAC grant application questions can be found at:

Work samples and other support materials

Please provide at least three representative samples of programs/work produced during the last two years. If files are too large to upload here, you may instead include links to work located on external sites (Vimeo, Soundcloud, etc). It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that links are operable.

Materials can include:

- Documentation of artistic products (e.g., audio recordings, film, video, photos).
- Documentation of public participation (e.g. photos, slides, video of people participating in activities).
- Letters of support or testimonials from participants, audience members, or partner organizations.
- Season brochures.
- Printed programs.
- Resumes or CVs of artists and/or staff.
- Press clippings (please send no more than six).
- Sample evaluation tools (e.g., audience or membership survey).
- Summary of evaluation results.

In the text box provided for each item, please list the title, year, duration, medium, etc. as applicable. Please limit audio and video clips to 2 minutes. (If a sample is longer than 2 minutes, you must indicate start and end times for the clip you would like the panel to review.)

A variety of materials is encouraged in order to illustrate your strengths and impact to the review panel.

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 submission box. If you have any questions, contact Todd Trebour, Organizations Program Director, at 401-222-3882 or 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 IAC grantees are required to submit a final report online annually, no later than July 31.
- **You must notify RISCA of any significant changes in organizational leadership.** Any changes must be reported to RISCA within two (2) months of the change.
- **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 projects!** If your projects include 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 events via RISCA's social media platforms and (possibly) email newsletter. Also, if you get any press or accolades for your projects or organization, you can submit information via the Submission Form as well.
- **RISCA wants to support your organization!** If you have any questions about your grant, or your panel comments, please feel free to reach out to RISCA staff.