



**What:** Opportunity Grant.

**Who:** Artists that live in Rhode Island, and are over the age of 18.

**For:** Unique, short-term opportunities that will support professional growth.

**Amount:** Up to \$1,000

## Grant Summary

**RISCA Opportunity Grants** provide Rhode Island artists funding for concrete opportunities that will support professional growth. This grant is available to artists working in all disciplines at any stage in their career. Examples of the wide range of opportunities covered include: materials to complete work for a specific show; attendance and travel costs for a residency/performance/conference within the state of Rhode Island; hiring a career coach or agent; attending classes or professional development events; and/or marketing materials or documentation of a specific project. The grant awards are for unique, short-term opportunities that do not constitute routine completion of work in progress and that the applicant would not be able to take advantage of without this funding.

We know for many applicants this is their first time writing a grant or this may be the only grant they apply to. For that reason, RISCA provides application support through grant workshops, one-on-one meetings, and drop-in office hours. Support from RISCA staff extends beyond the grant application itself! In addition to being available throughout the application period to support you in developing your proposal, the Individual Artists Program Director will be available once you've received your award notification to provide advice and ideas.

For more information on what support opportunities are currently available, visit the RISCA website: <https://risca.online/>.

## Meet RISCA's Individual Artists Program Director, Mollie Flanagan.



Mollie Flanagan (she/her) is the Individual Artists Program Director at RISCA. She manages the agency's support for artists, including grants, programs, and services. After a decade long career as a lighting designer, stage manager, and production manager for a wide variety of performing arts, Mollie went to grad school for arts entrepreneurship and management. During grad school, she discovered a love for artist services – supporting individual artists in making art and making a living.

She joined the RISCA staff in February 2017, and currently lives by the river in Central Falls. She is now a hobby crafter – knitting, crocheting, and making things out of cement (small planters, mostly). You can reach her by email at [mollie.flanagan@arts.ri.gov](mailto:mollie.flanagan@arts.ri.gov).

## Who is eligible to apply for this program?

To be eligible, you must:

- Have been domiciled in Rhode Island for at least one year at the time of application. This means your home in Rhode Island is your primary residence, and is the address you use for legal forms, state income taxes, car registration, driver's license or state issued id, and voter registration - regardless of whether you own or rent your home.
- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Not currently be enrolled in an arts degree seeking program or attending high school full time.
- Be a legal resident of the United States with a tax id number (either Social Security number or an Individual Taxpayer Identification (ITIN) number). This includes refugees, immigrants, and temporary residents. This does not include people in the country on a tourist visa.
- Be a practicing artist. RISCA defines practicing artist as "A person that intentionally creates or practices art in any discipline that":
  - Has specialized training in the artistic field from any source, not necessarily in formal academic institutions.
  - Is committed to devoting significant time to artistic activity, as is possible financially.
  - Is or is working towards earning some portion of their income from their art.
  - Disciplines include, but are NOT limited to: musician, painter, poet, choreographer, teaching artist, ceramicist, storyteller, performer, playwright, sculptor, photographer, wampum artist, printmaker, animator, cartoonist, textile and fashion designer, and filmmaker.

### **I have a disability – what kind of assistance can Mollie provide me with my application?**

Applicants who need assistance completing an application should contact Mollie in advance of the deadline. Mollie can provide – or arrange for the provision of – whatever assistance you require. For individuals with disabilities for whom writing a grant is prohibitive, Mollie can arrange for transcription support if an applicant discloses their needs. Please contact Mollie at least three weeks ahead of the deadline.

Large print grant guidelines are available here: [LINK](#).

### **I'm not comfortable writing or communicating in English – what kind of assistance can Mollie provide me with my application?**

If you need assistance completing an application, you should contact Mollie in advance of the deadline. Mollie can arrange for the provision of translation support for your application. Depending on the time of year, this can take approximately 3 weeks to schedule as we work with outside translation services.

**Before I even think about applying for this grant, what are the TWO most important things I need to know?**

1. Mollie is here to help you with your application – it is a big part of her job. Your emails will not annoy her but please understand that it might take her a bit to respond since she will have many requests from other applicants.
2. Read these grant guidelines at least twice before contacting Mollie as they will answer 95% of your questions and save you both time. That way you can spend your time together focusing on your project and your application.

**What are the deadlines for this program and time periods for what they fund?**

- You can apply to this program any time, applications will be reviewed once a month.
- All applications submitted on the **1<sup>st</sup> of each month** by 11:59pm will be reviewed and notified of decisions by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- You can apply for opportunities happening within 3 months of the application. For example, if you submit an application on January 10, the program/opportunity must happen before April 10. Note that if you receive a grant, it will take 4-6 weeks to receive payment once you have submitted all necessary forms.

**What are examples of the kind of projects this grant program funds?**

This program is designed to fund a broad range of opportunities, so it can be as responsive as possible to what artists need. The opportunity must be unique – something that isn't a routine part of your art practice. It must be something you would not be able to take advantage of without this funding. It should move your art practice, or the business of your art practice, forward in some way. Note that this program can only fund things happening within the state of Rhode Island, which does include attending or participating in a class/event virtually.

- Example One: You are struggling with money management and taxes around the business of your art practice, and you want to enroll in a financial bootcamp specifically for artists. The classes are virtual: though the facilitator/teacher is out of state, you will be attending from your home or workspace in Rhode Island. This grant can support class enrollment costs.
- Example Two: You are showing site specific work (in any discipline) and need to have it documented in some way. This grant can support hiring a photographer or videographer.
- Example Three: You were selected for a major juried show, but need to frame your work on a short timeline to participate. This grant can support framing costs.

**What are examples of the kind of projects this grant program funds?**

- Example One: Your income is less than expected for any reason, and you are a bit short on funds for your basic bills (example: rent; utilities).
- Example Two: You need to buy canvas and paints to start your next project. This is a routine part of your art practice – not a specific and unexpected opportunity.

### What other rules do I need to know about the Opportunity Grant for Individuals program?

- **The maximum grant award in this category is \$1,000.** You can apply for any amount between \$100 and \$1,000 – we strongly encourage you to apply for the LEAST amount of funding you need to take advantage of this opportunity. Money is limited, and we want to be able to support as many artists as possible. No partial grants will be awarded – meaning you will either receive the full amount you apply for, or no funding.
- **You may only submit one application per month.** If you receive an Opportunity Grant, you are ineligible for one year from the date you received notification. If you are currently receiving funding through the [GOS] program, you are ineligible.
- **If you receive a grant, you must credit RISCA on all marketing materials.** Funding for grants awarded by RISCA is provided by the Rhode Island State General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, on behalf of the residents of Rhode Island. For that reason, awardees must credit RISCA on all printed material where funders and supporters are listed and on all printed programs (see *I got a grant award! What do I do now?* section for more 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.** Sometimes delays in passing the state budget will delay grant award notifications and processing of grant payments – we can't award grants if we don't know for sure we will have funds.
- **Grant applications are considered on a competitive basis.** Your application may meet all the eligibility criteria and be incredibly meaningful to you. But remember that there will be more applications than can be granted with available funds. We anticipate awarding approximately 1-3 Opportunity Grants each month. These grants will be awarded by lottery once you have passed an initial eligibility and appropriateness screening by Mollie and a minimum of one member of RISCA's governing council. No application is guaranteed funding, even if all basic criteria have been met.

### What can I use my grant award for? And what CAN'T I use my grant award for?

If you receive a grant award, it can be used for the expenses you planned for in the budget you submitted. We understand that this budget is just a plan, and that you may spend the funds in slightly different ways. This is ok, you just need to inform Mollie once your program is complete. **However, you do need to adhere to the below guidance.**

There are many expenses not allowed with your grant award. Because RISCA grants out money from the National Endowment for the Arts, we are obligated to follow these rules set forth by the NEA.

Expenses that cannot be covered by your grant award:

- **Capital projects.** The construction or renovation of buildings or additions to buildings, with the exception of accessibility improvements to cultural facilities.
- Any **fundraising** expenses – like creating rewards for a Kickstarter or hosting a fundraising event for any purpose.
- **Prizes and awards.** You cannot spend funds on a prize or award for another event/person/organization.
- **Alcohol and some Hospitality Expenses.** Purchase of alcohol with grant funds is strictly prohibited. You may not spend funds on any other food or beverage unless it is integral to the opportunity – please contact Mollie with specific questions. You may not spend grant funds on hospitality, travel, or food and beverage expenses if it was not described in the budget you submitted with your application.
- **Expenses outside of award period.** Your grant award can't be used to cover expenses incurred or activities occurring prior to the date of your application, or 3 months after the date of your application.
- **Regranting funds.** You may not use these grant funds to support grants to other artists or organizations through an application process.
- **Undergraduate or graduate school activities.** Activities that are part of a graduate or undergraduate degree program, or for which academic credit is received.
- **Religious activities.** Your project and/or this opportunity must not proselytize or promote religious activities or take place as part of a religious service.

### **Who makes grant award decisions for this grant?**

Because RISCA is a state agency granting out taxpayer funds, RISCA staff does NOT make any funding decisions. This is great news for applicants! RISCA staff is available to answer questions and help applicants with their applications.

The Opportunity Grant for Individuals (OGI) is awarded using a lottery system. After Mollie has screened the application for eligibility and completeness and a member of RISCA's Governing Council has screened the application for appropriateness, applications will be randomly selected until available funds for that grant period are expended. We expect to award between 1 and 3 grants per month.

### **What are the steps in the decision-making process for grant awards?**

There are 8-steps in RISCA's decision-making process for the Opportunity Grant for Individuals program:

- **STEP 1: You submit your application.** Once you have submitted your application, no alterations or additions may be made to your application. Applications are reviewed based on the contents of your application only. If your application is ineligible or incomplete, you will be notified of the problem and can resubmit the next month.

- **STEP 2: Mollie reviews applications and makes sure they are eligible.** Mollie reviews each application for eligibility and submission requirements.
- **STEP 3: One member of RISCA’s governing council screens all applications for appropriateness and fit with the grant program.**
- **STEP 4: Lottery Selection.** All eligible and appropriate applications are entered into a lottery, and awards are made until funds are expended.
- **STEP 5: RISCA’s Governing Council reviews and approves panel recommendations.** Mollie presents the panel’s award recommendations to the Governor-appointed Council that oversees RISCA. They are responsible for reviewing and approving grant awards.
- **STEP 6: Applicants are notified if they have or have not received a grant award!** We will notify you about your status by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, for applications submitted by the 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **STEP 7: Awardees will thoroughly read and sign their grant award agreements AND register with Ocean State Procures.** We cannot process your grant payment until you are an approved vendor of the State of Rhode Island (by registering with Ocean State Procures) with an approved W-9 and you have signed your grant agreement form. Once those things are completed, applicants can assume it will take between 4-6 weeks to receive their grant payment. 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.
- **STEP 8: Mollie will reach out to applicants and see if they want to discuss anything about their grant or need any support.** This is totally optional – you are also welcome to reach out Mollie before she contacts you!

### **How do I apply for this grant?**

Opportunity Grant for Individuals applications must be submitted online via <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=artsrischolarship>. You can view the application form here: LINK.

All application materials must be included in the online application. We recommend sharing links to audio and visual files rather than upload the files themselves, as panelists may have difficulty reviewing audio and visual files not shared via an online platform like Vimeo, YouTube, etc.

### **I’ve received a grant award! Now what do I do?**

Congratulations! First things first, you will want to sign the grant agreement form and register with Ocean State Procures (ADD LINK TO VNDOR QUICK START GUIDE) as soon as possible so we can start processing your grant payment. Once you have completed those things, your grant payment may take between 4-8 weeks to receive. Read your Grant Award Email thoroughly, as it will have instructions on how to register with Oceans State Procures and how to upload your W-9 to the state payment system.

Other things you will need to do:

- **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 the RISCA logo in association with that acknowledgment. Further detail regarding acknowledgment can be found at <https://risca.online/grants/public-acknowledgment/>.
- **You must submit a brief final grant report to RISCA via the online grant system.** All grantees are required to submit a brief final report no later than the July 31 following the grant funding cycle. You can find a PDF of the final report here: [LINK](#). 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 grant.** You should 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.
- **The grant must be used exclusively for the purposes specified in the Grant Agreement, and as indicated in the grant application.** Any alternative use of funds needs to be cleared by Mollie in advance in writing (by email), 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.

### What is Ocean State Procures, and how do I register?

All Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA) grant award recipients need to have an approved vendor profile in the Rhode Island OCEAN STATE PROCURES (OSP) system. This new online registration system is used by the State of Rhode Island for any vendor of the state, not just those working with or receiving grant awards from RISCA. **Use the Vendor Self-Registration Quick Start Guide** (<https://www.ridop.ri.gov/documents/vendor-self-registration-quick-start-guide.pdf>) for complete details on to fully register and create a login to access your secure Vendor Portal at <http://ridop.ri.gov/vendor-registration/>. Please note this is a 2-step process:

1. **Create Vendor Profile** - After completing Quick Start Guide step 6 “submit registration”, your login credentials and the login link will be emailed to you (with the subject line: “Welcome to WebProcure!”).
2. **Upload W-9** - Once you have registered (including uploading a new W-9) and been approved by OSP, RISCA can process your award payment.

### What if I don't want my grant award anymore?

Before deciding to decline your grant award for any reason, we recommend you reach out to Mollie to see if accommodations or modifications can be made. If you do decide to decline your Opportunity Grant Guidelines

Draft 8/3/21

Page 7

award, this is totally fine. It will have no bearing on future grant applications you might submit to RISCA. You will send an email to Mollie indicating your desire to decline your award, and she will assist you.

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