

About RISCA's General Operating Support for Organizations (GOS-O) Program.

RISCA's General Operating Support for Organizations Program (GOS-O), formerly called the Investments in Arts and Culture (IAC) Program, provides multi-year unrestricted operating support to arts and culture organizations* and culturally specific organizations* across Rhode Island that meaningfully engage and inspire their community through arts and culture programming. Organizations in this program make important contributions to the diversity and vitality of our communities, the economy of our state, the enrichment of all Rhode Islanders, and our quality of life.

Curious if your organization is eligible for this program? Check out the *Who is eligible to apply for this program?* section of these guidelines. If you are still unsure, feel free to contact Todd Trebour, Organizations Program Director, at todd.trebour@arts.ri.gov or 401-222-3882.

Note: throughout this document, you will see an asterix (*) next to some terms which indicates there is a definition for this term in the *Glossary*. This section is located at the end of the document.

Support from RISCA staff people extends beyond the grant application itself! In addition to being available throughout the application period to support you in developing your proposal, the Organizations Program Director will be in contact once you've received your award notification to provide advice, ideas, or connections to assist your organization in its work. Should you be awarded a grant from RISCA (see *I've received a grant award! Now what do I do?* section for more details) your final report will include an annual 60-minute meeting (in-person, by phone, or by Zoom) with the Organizations Program Director so we can understand how your organization is doing and how best we can support your organization outside of your grant award.

For more information on what support opportunities are currently available, check out the RISCA website [here](#).

Meet RISCA's Organizations Program Director, Todd Trebour. Todd is available to help you with your application!



Todd Trebour (he/him/his) is the Organizations Program Director at RISCA. Todd manages and oversees the agency's support for organizations, including grants, programs, and services. Since 2018, he has seen a doubling in the number of applications to the Arts Access project grant program for nonprofit organizations thanks to intensive and continuous outreach to Rhode Island communities. Prior to working at RISCA, Todd held several arts management positions in New England, most recently as the Program Coordinator for the UMass Amherst Arts Extension Service, a national arts service organization and the arts management program at the University. Before transitioning into arts management, Todd worked for eight years as a freelance operatic performer working in Texas, Massachusetts, Halifax NS, and many points in between.

Introduce yourself to Todd by emailing him at todd.trebour@arts.ri.gov.

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Wait – what happened to the Investments in Arts and Culture program?

In February 2020, RISCA’s Governor-appointed Council leadership approved a timeline and process for the restructure of the Investments in Arts and Culture program, the prior version of RISCA’s general operating support program. In particular, RISCA’s Governor-appointed Council wanted to ensure that RISCA’s support of arts and culture organizations affirms our values of equity and access.

As a part of the process, RISCA stewarded a working group that helped vet and devise strategies for achieving goals of the program within the context of the new **strategic plan**, new values statement, and the Governing Council’s directive.

The Working Group met four times between May – October 2020. Consisting of 36 people from 22 RI-based arts and culture organizations around the Ocean State, participating organizations varied in size, communities engaged, and artistic discipline/cultural tradition.

The working group consisted of organizations in the Investments in Arts and Culture program, as well as current cohort and alumni organizations of the [Rhode Island Expansion Arts Program](#): AS220, Arts Equity RI (formerly VSA Arts), Chorus of Westerly, City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism, Community MusicWorks, Eastern Medicine Singers, Hera Gallery, India Association of Rhode Island, Island Moving Company, Kingston Chamber Music Festival, Manton Avenue Project, New Urban Arts, newportFILM, Oasis International, Providence CityArts for Youth, Rhode Island Black Storytellers, Rhode Island Latino Arts, RI Philharmonic Orchestra and Music School, Riverzedge Arts, Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre, Teatro ECAS, and Trinity Repertory Company.

The Working Group developed these goals for the new general operating support program, now called General Operating Support for Organizations (GOS-O).

1. Provide multi-year unrestricted operating support for arts and culture organizations throughout the state through a competitive grant program.
2. Include organizations that are evaluated by peer review panels as being responsive and accountable to the cultural needs of their identified communities*.
3. Through extensive recruitment and a streamlined entrance process, includes organizations that better represent the diversity of the state along the following parameters:
 - *Racial*: only five BIPOC centered* organizations are in this program as of 2020. RISCA has set a goal of at least ten BIPOC centered organizations in the program by 2025.
 - *Geographic*: there are towns and communities that have no organizational representation in GOS-O. RISCA has set a goal of including at least three organizations from three different, unrepresented towns or cities in the GOS-O program by 2025. Current unrepresented towns and cities include Barrington, Burrillville, Charlestown, Coventry, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Hopkinton, Johnston, Little Compton, Middletown, Narragansett, North Kingstown, North Providence, North Smithfield, Richmond, Smithfield, Tiverton, Warren, West Greenwich, and West Warwick.

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4. Provide a just and equitable distribution of funding that helps address the damage done by generations of institutional racism*. For this goal to be realized, additional funding consideration will be given to organizations that represent historically and/or continuously marginalized communities or constituencies in their mission, programming, staff leadership, and board. In this specific context, historically and/or continuously marginalized communities may include but are not limited to BIPOC* communities, such as African and African American, Arab, Asian and Asian American, Latinx, Middle Eastern, Native American and Indigenous, or Pacific Islander communities; people with disabilities; or others who can make a case for being historically and/or continuously marginalized.

In addition to the Working Group, RISCA drew on the expertise of many field colleagues in developing this new program. A special thank you to our colleagues at the Arizona Commission on the Arts, the City of Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, Grantmakers Council of Rhode Island, Indiana Arts Council, Indiana University's O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Maryland State Council on the Arts, Mass Cultural Council, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and the Rhode Island Foundation.

Those are great goals – but how will you evaluate the effectiveness of this new grant program?

Each summer, RISCA staff will meet to assess whether or not the GOS-O program is accomplishing its goals and if it is being responsive to the current moment. This will be partially informed by annual site visits with organizations in the program. Unless there is a need to convene to address issues in the program prior to the summer of 2025, the Organizations Program Director will organize a stipended, BIPOC* Advisory Group (or majority BIPOC Advisory Group) who will review prepared assessments of the program in one to two meetings in the summer of 2025, following the announcement of the FY26 GOS-O awardees. They will suggest modifications or evolutions to the program within its current structure. RISCA staff will modify the program within its current structure taking into account the Advisory Group's suggestions, share them for public reaction in a meeting at the end of summer of 2025, and then implement in time for the opening of the FY27 grant cycle.

Unless there is a need to restructure this program prior to 2030, the GOS-O program should go through a full review and a new restructuring process in 2030. The restructuring process should relate to the strategic plan and value statement or RISCA in existence in that moment.

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

First, Todd is here to help you with your application. You are not annoying him if you email or call him – but please understand he will have a high volume of requests. As a resident of Rhode Island, it is his job to help you with your grant application (and he enjoys doing so!).

Second, read these grant guidelines at least twice before contacting Todd as they will answer 95% of your questions and save you both time. That way, if and when you do talk, you can spend your time together focusing on your project and your application. There are many exceptions to this piece of advice: if you need guidelines in large print, in a different language, or are unable to read or process these guidelines due to a learning disability, then please feel to reach out to Todd and he can assist you.

What are the deadlines for this program?

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The deadline to apply for the General Operating Support for Organizations Program (GOS-O) is 11:59 PM on April 1.

With this newly restructured program, **all** organizations currently in the program will reapply to the program by the April 1, 2022 deadline for FY23.

*Once organizations have been accepted into GOS-O, they will submit a full application once every three 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. While all organizations will be evaluated using the same criteria (see *How are grant applications evaluated by a panel?*), applications and application requirements will be different for each budget cohort commensurate with the size and resources of different sized organizations.*

- **Budgets over \$500,000:** FY24 – Deadline is April 1, 2023.
- **Budgets from \$100,000 - \$500,000:** FY25 – Deadline is April 1, 2024.
- **Budgets under \$100,000:** FY26 – Deadline is April 1, 2025.

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.

Who is eligible to apply for this program?

New applicants to the GOS-O category may submit a full application, regardless of their budget size, in the year in which they become eligible. After that, they will submit a full application when their budget cohort is up for review. Please note that organizations no longer need to be invited to apply to this program but will be contacted if they meet the following eligibility criteria. Organizations who believe they are eligible may also reach out to the Organizations Program Director at any point.

If an organization's application is denied an award, they can reapply when their budget cohort is next up for full application. In the meantime, they are welcome to apply to RISCA's Project Grant for Organizations program.

In order to qualify for the GOS-O program, you must:

- **Be a nonprofit organization.** Your organization must be incorporated in, headquartered, 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](#)).

The organization must have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), a UEI (SAM) number, and have received federal tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

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- **A non-exempt, Rhode Island-based organization using a fiscal sponsor that fits the above requirements** (see **Fiscal Sponsorship** section).
- **A semi-independent cultural entity that is either 1) associated with a university or 2) a subdivision of a larger nonprofit, only if they meet the following additional eligibility criteria:**
 - Manage their own budget.
 - Have at least one full-time (min. 30 hours per week) compensated administrative staff position dedicated solely to the operation of the cultural entity.
 - Have an advisory board that meets regularly to discuss policy, strategic direction, and resource development plans to ensure long-term sustainability.

Organizations must also:

- **Have arts and culture explicitly stated as a central part of your organization’s mission.** Arts and culture organizations* have as their primary mission regular cultural programs or services. An organization that includes arts and culture as a primary and major focus of a larger mission may apply, if their larger mission is centered in engaging a specific cultural group. Please see the glossary for a definition of culturally specific organizations*.
- **Be in continuous operation and exhibiting or producing arts and culture programming for each year of the past five years.** The programming may be seasonal in nature and not necessarily take up a full academic or calendar year.
- **Present public programming in ADA accessible spaces.** Persons with disabilities have the right to access all RISCA-funded programs. Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 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 programming facilities meet or exceed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for audience members and are accessible to all. In general, 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 <http://www.arts.gov/resources/Accessibility/Planning/BriefChecklist.PDF> for more information.

If your facilities for presenting public programming (or facilities you use for programming) do not meet any one of the standards of the ADA, you are not in compliance and may be ineligible for RISCA funding.

- **Have high scores in the Project Grant for Organizations (formerly Arts Access) or Project Grant in Education program.** Your organization must receive an adjusted panel score of 83 or higher at least once a year for *three* consecutive years in RISCA’s Project Grant for Organizations OR Project Grant in Education grant programs. RI Expansion Arts Organizations, BIPOC centered

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organizations, organizations representing historically and/or continuously marginalized communities, or organizations that are based in and engage towns and communities unrepresented in the GOS program need to receive an adjusted panel score of 83 or higher at least once a year for *two* consecutive years in RISCA's Project Grant for Organizations OR Project Grant in Education grant programs to be eligible. 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 Project Grant for Organizations program.

What if I am NOT an organization that fits RISCA's definition of a non-profit organization?

Organizations that do not have a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service, and who have annual budgets under \$50,000, 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.

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.

Parent corporations and fiscal sponsors may be grantees or applicants in the Project Grant for Organizations and other RISCA grant programs, including the GOS-O Program

In short, most any organization that fits RISCA's definition of a non-profit can be a fiscal sponsor – which means there are plenty out there you probably know!

What other rules do I need to know about the General Operating Support for Organizations program?

- **GOS-O grantees are ineligible to apply for or receive funding from any other RISCA grant program, with the exception of the Cultural Facilities grant program.** All applicants, however, are encouraged to collaborate as partners on other RISCA-funded projects where non-GOS-O organizations may be lead applicants. GOS-O grantees may function as a fiscal sponsor to organizations applying in other project 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 *I've received a grant award! Now what do I do?* below for details).
- **All RISCA grant awards are contingent upon the availability of funds from the Rhode**

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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. Note also that it can take up to 120 days from the date you sign your grant agreement to receive your grant payment from the state.

- **Grant applications are considered on a competitive basis.** Your application may meet all the eligibility criteria, and the work of your organization may be incredibly meaningful to your community. But remember: this is a competitive program with many other amazing organizations from around the state also applying. Because of the many organizations doing high-quality work in Rhode Island, panels *always* wish to recommend more grant awards than they are able to fund. If your organization does not receive a GOS-O grant, they may apply at the October 1 deadline for a Project Grant for Organizations.
- **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.

How are grant awards determined?

GOS-O applicants will not request specific grant amounts. Rather, grant awards will be determined by the following factors:

- Panel ranking and funding recommendation.
- Organization’s annual operating budget.
- If the organization represents historically and/or continuously marginalized communities or constituencies in their mission, programming, staff leadership, and board, e.g. fits RISCA’s definition of a BIPOC centered organization.
- The amount of funds allocated for organizational support by the Council.

Budget Class	Award Range	"Middle" Award	Award Increments
under \$50K	\$3,000 - \$5,000	\$4,000	\$3,000; \$4,000; \$5,000
\$50-\$100K	\$4,000 - \$7,000	\$5,500	\$4,000; \$5,500; \$7,000
\$100-\$250K	\$5,000 - \$9,000	\$7,000	\$5,000; \$7,500; \$9,000
\$250-\$500K	\$6000 - \$13,000	\$9,500	\$6,000; \$9,500; \$13,000
\$500K-\$1M	\$8000 - \$17,000	\$12,500	\$8,000; \$12,500; \$17,000
\$1-\$2M	\$10000 - \$21,000	\$15,550	\$10,000; \$15,500; \$21,000
>\$2M	\$15,000 - \$40,000	\$27,500	\$15,000; \$21,250; \$27,500; \$33,750; \$40,000

NOTE: Each year GOS-O award amounts are determined based on RISCA’s legislative budget allocation. Award amounts listed do not represent guaranteed minimums and maximums, and organizations are

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strongly encouraged to budget conservatively when forecasting potential awards, due to the possible fluid nature of RISCA’s budget post-pandemic, and related fluctuations of available grant funds.

In line with RISCA’s strategic plan and the goals of this program, additional funding consideration will be given to organizations that represent historically and/or continuously marginalized communities or constituencies in their mission, programming, staff leadership, and board, e.g. BIPOC centered organizations. For organizations who fit these criteria, award ranges will be automatically 1.5 times larger:

Budget Class	Award Range	"Middle" Award	Award Increments
under \$50K	\$4,500 - \$7,500	\$6,000	\$4,500; \$6,000; \$7,500
\$50-\$100K	\$6,000 - \$10,500	\$8,250	\$6,000; \$8,250; \$10,500
\$100-\$250K	\$7,500 - \$13,500	\$10,500	\$7,500; \$10,500; \$13,500
\$250-\$500K	\$9,000 - 19,500	\$14,250	\$9,000; \$14,250; \$19,500
\$500-\$1M	\$12,000 - \$25,500	\$18,750	\$12,000; \$18,750; \$25,500
\$1-\$2M	N/A	N/A	
>\$2M	N/A	N/A	

Historically and/or continuously marginalized communities may include but are not limited to BIPOC communities, such as African and African American, Arab, Asian and Asian American, Latinx, Middle Eastern, Native American and Indigenous, or Pacific Islander communities; people with disabilities; or others who can make a case for being historically and/or continuously marginalized.

Panels will make funding recommendations based on applicant scores, with award options determined by an organization’s budget class. Panels cannot edit the scoring scheme when making funding recommendations.

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

The grant award can be used for expenses that are general operating expenses. However, there are a lot of things your grant awards can’t be used for. Because we grant funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, we are obligated to follow these rules set forth by them. These are expenses that cannot be covered by your grant award:

- **Expenses for programs that occur in spaces that are not ADA compliant.** 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.”

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

- **Capital projects.** The construction or renovation of buildings or additions to buildings, with the exception of accessibility improvements to cultural facilities.
- **Addressing Debt.** Eliminating or reducing existing debt, or for contributions to an endowment fund.
- **Development:** 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, you just can't use your grant monies for the prize or award. If using an RFP or RFQ process to select artists for a project, RISCA funds can be used to pay artists. In this scenario, these are considered stipends, not awards or prizes, and should be publicly communicated as such.
- **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; you just can't use your grant monies for hospitality expenses.
- **Expenses outside of award period.** Your grant award can't be used to cover 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.** Performances and exhibitions not available to the general public.

Who makes grant award decisions at RISCA?

Because RISCA is a state agency granting out taxpayer funds, RISCA staff does NOT make any funding decisions: in the GOS-O program, a panel consisting of five individuals from inside and outside of Rhode

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Island – chosen for their experience working at arts and culture organizations of similar size to that budget cohort being evaluated that year, as well as expertise in the field – is selected. This is great news for applicants! RISCA staff is available to answer questions and help applicants with their applications.

A typical review panel reviews no more than 30 applications. In line with our strategic plan, the five-person panel must have:

- A minimum of two panel members who identify as BIPOC (see definition in *Glossary*).
- A minimum of one panel member who is a practicing artist (see definition in *Glossary*).

RISCA is committed to a peer review process that provides fresh and diverse* input from an ever-evolving field. In addition, RISCA will consider age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, geography, discipline of arts experience, relationship to arts and culture (e.g. being an artist, arts administrator, or arts enthusiast), and other factors when curating its application review panels. A panelist can be on a review panel three times over the course of a three years – which encompasses 6 grant cycles. Panelists cannot be on a panel in the same grant program during the three-year period. This ensures a changing and diverse array of individuals evaluating our grant applications and guarantees that panels are different every grant cycle.

Serving as a grant panelist is a fantastic way to learn about RISCA’s grantmaking process, as well as how to write grants in general. If you are interested in serving on a grant panel, please fill out [this form](#). We can’t guarantee that we can accommodate your request because of our commitment to panel diversity, but we are always looking for new panelists. Panelists receive a stipend of \$250 for their time and expertise.

How are grant applications evaluated by a panel?

You can view the full rubric grant panelists use to score your application [here](#). The three review criteria are:

Artistic Vibrancy and Relevancy (50 Points): this criterion reflects an organization’s ability to meaningfully engage and inspire its community through arts and culture in order to achieve its mission.

An organization demonstrates this by:

- Having a clear relationship between core programming, mission, and organizational community*.
- Clearly defining the geographic community* and organizational community they engage.
- Demonstrating that the organization understands, works with, and is responsive to its organizational community through its programming.
- Identifying groups in their geographic community who are underrepresented in their organizational community and programming, and showing evidence of proactively working to engage those groups.
- Building meaningful relationships with community partners, within and outside of the arts and culture sector.

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Organizational Capacity and Ingenuity (40 Points): this criterion reflects the ability of an organization's board and staff to manage resources, plan, evaluate, and – when necessary - creatively pivot their organization and their programming now and for years to come.

An organization displaying strong organizational capacity and ingenuity will:

- Have a diverse* board and staff that is demographically reflective of the organizational community being engaged by the organization.
- Display processes and strategies for responding to identified financial issues changing financial circumstances.
- Engage in policy-making, planning and evaluation processes – commensurate with the size and capacity of the organizations – that incorporate or respond to their organizational community.
- Take actions based on the result of their policies, and planning and evaluation processes.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity*, Inclusion, and Access* (10 points):

- Exhibit practices that are inclusive and welcoming of all people in their geographic community including those who have been historically and/or continuously marginalized and underrepresented, e.g. immigrant groups, BIPOC communities, rural populations, aging populations, people living in poverty, people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, incarcerated populations, communities recovering from trauma or disaster, and military service members and veterans.
- Demonstrate practical application of stated DEIA goals through documented recruitment & selection and work processes.
- Show that staff at a variety of levels, board, volunteers, artists and key collaborators include those in their organizational community who have been historically and/or continuously marginalized and underrepresented in both their public-facing programming and administrative work.

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

There are 12-steps in RISCA's decision-making process for grant awards:

- **STEP 1: Todd assembles the grant panels starting prior to the grant deadline.** While this starts prior to the grant deadline, it often continues after the grant deadline once it is clear how many applications have been received, how many are eligible, and how many panels are needed. For GOS-O, Todd reaches out to potential panelists who aren't applying for GOS-O that cycle to see if they might be interested, curating panels that reflect RISCA's diversity requirements.
- **STEP 2: You submit your application by the grant deadline.** Once the application deadlines pass, no alterations or additions may be made to your application. Applications are reviewed by the grant panel based on the contents of your application only.
- **STEP 3: Todd reviews applications and makes sure they are eligible.** Todd reviews each application for compliance with eligibility and submission requirements. If Todd detects any issues, he may

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contact applicants for more information.

- **STEP 4: RISCA staff provides orientation and training to panelists.** Panelists don't receive the applications they are to review until they complete a two-part panel training: the first part focuses on implicit bias; the second part focuses on the logistics of being a panelist, including a review of the applications and rubrics.
- **STEP 5: Todd forwards all eligible applications to the panel(s).** If more than one panel is needed for a budget cohort, Todd uses a randomization process to randomly assign applications to panels.
- **STEP 6: The panel(s) review their assigned applications and pre-score them.** Using the rubric for the program, panelists have typically between 4-6 weeks to review applications and pre-score them prior to their in-person panel meeting.
- **STEP 7: Panel(s) meet for their in-person meeting and make funding recommendations.** The panel then meets in person at RISCA offices or via Zoom to discuss each application. Panels typically spend approximately 15 minutes discussing each application. After each discussion, panelists have the option of privately adjusting their pre-scores. Todd facilitates the discussion but otherwise does not participate except to address factual inaccuracies in the panel's conversation. He and another RISCA staff person take notes during the panel to share with applicants later. *Applicants will have the ability to call in and listen to the panel discuss their application.*

At the end of the day in a closed session, the panel is shown a spreadsheet that displays the applicants and their total panel scores (meaning the combined total of each panelist's scores on a given application) in descending order. Using their rankings as a guide, panelists make funding recommendations. See the *How are grant awards determined?* section for more details.

- **STEP 8: Todd writes panel comments for each applicant.** Based on the panel's discussion, Todd provides feedback for each applicant on their application, including ways applicants can make improvements for future applications. Whether or not an applicant is recommended for a grant, they will have the option of meeting or having a call with Todd to discuss the panel comments and ways to improve their applications. Moreover, the feedback GOS-O applicants receive in a given cycle will inform the programming for organizations RISCA offers to address shared issues among declined applicant organizations.
- **STEP 9: RISCA's Governing Council reviews and approves panel recommendations.** Todd presents the panel's award recommendations to the Governor-appointed Council that oversees RISCA. They are responsible for reviewing and approving panels recommended grant awards.
- **STEP 10: Applicants are notified as to whether or not they have received a grant award!** GOS-O applicants will be notified about their grant award status one week after the state budget is signed by the Governor. This is a moving target – in an ideal year, the state budget will pass the legislature and be signed by the Governor in late June, with notifications happening around the 4th of July. While you can of course reach out to Todd and ask him the status of your April 1st application, his answer will typically be “you will be notified one week after the Governor approves the state budget.”

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- **STEP 11: Awardees will thoroughly read and sign their grant award agreements, upload their W-9s to the state payment system (if necessary), and submit any overdue final reports (if necessary).** We cannot process your grant payment without a processed W-9, signed grant agreement form, and the receipt of any overdue grant reports. Once those things have been done, applicants can assume it will take up to 120 days to receive their grant payment. Applicants should be aware of this possibility and plan their cash flow accordingly.
- **STEP 12: Todd will reach out to applicants and see if they want to discuss their panel comments.** This is totally optional – you are also welcome to reach out Todd before he contacts you!

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

Applicants who need assistance completing an application should contact Todd in advance of the deadline. Todd can provide – or arrange for the provision of – whatever assistance you require. For individuals with learning disabilities for whom writing a grant is prohibitive, Todd can arrange for transcription support if an applicant discloses their needs. In order to allow for timely completion of your application, we recommend you notify Todd at least three weeks prior to the deadline. LARGE PRINT GUIDELINES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

I’m not comfortable writing or communicating in English – what kind of assistance can Todd provide me with my application?

Applicants who need assistance completing an application should contact Todd in advance of the deadline. Todd can arrange for the provision of translation support for your application. In order to allow for timely completion of your application, we recommend you notify Todd at least three weeks prior to the application deadline.

How do I apply for this grant and what things do I need to have to complete the application?

Applicants must submit a completed GOS-O application form online via <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=artsri>. Organizations up for reapplication or first-time applicant organizations will be provided with instructions on how to access the GOS application once logged in. Complete applications, including attachments, must be submitted by the deadline in order to be considered by the panel. Application should include the following attachments

- **501(c)(3) Determination Letter.** We are required to grant out federally-sourced funds to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. If you are not a federally registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, this is a letter you will need from your fiscal sponsor.
- **Unique Entity ID (UEI) or SAM.** A UEI is a special 12-digit identification the federal government requires of any entity receiving federal funds. If you are not a federally registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, this is a number you will need from your fiscal sponsor. If you don’t have one at the time application, don’t worry! The process to get a UEI is free and simple. Email Todd at todd.trebour@arts.ri.gov and he will tell you what to do so you can still submit your application.

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- **Your most recent 990 from one of the past two fiscal years.** A 990 is the type of annual tax return 501(c)(3) nonprofits file. We need this document so we know your nonprofit is in good standing. If you are not a federally registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, this is a document you will need from your fiscal sponsor. If your non-profit is new and hasn't completed a 990 yet, submit a Word document that indicates that.
- **Letter from fiscal sponsor, if applicable.** You can see a fiscal sponsor template letter [here](#). See the *What if I am NOT an organization that fits RISCA's definition of a non-profit organization?* section of this FAQ for more information.
- **Support materials from the last two years showing how your organization's work is meaningful to your community.** You can submit up to four. These can be letters of support from a diverse array of community partners or valued members of your communities inside or outside of the arts sector; a document of quotes from past or current program participants; or anything else in the voice of community members outside of your organization. *Remember: the panel is reading up to 30 applications – keep your support materials targeted to what you want panelists to see, hear, and know.*
- **Support materials gathered from the last two years showing the artistic and/or cultural programming of your organization (video, images, resume, short bios with links to social media/Vimeo/YouTube, CVs, resumes, etc).** You can submit up to four. These can be videos, images, resumes, short bios, CVs, resumes, or links to audio or video files, etc. Due to limitations on file size in the grants system, we recommend you don't upload audio or video files directly to the grant system, but to services like Vimeo, YouTube, or SoundCloud. You can then share the link in the support materials box. *Remember: the panel is reading up to 30 applications – keep your support materials targeted to what you want panelists to see, hear, and know.*
- Board-approved Organizational Budget for your current fiscal year, on the form provided in the application.
- **Current list of staff and board members with affiliations.** *If an applicant is using a fiscal sponsor, they would submit the list of the advisory board/committee(s) guiding their organization's work.*

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. This is also why we recommend sharing links to audio and visual files rather than the files themselves, as panelists may have difficulty reviewing audio and visual files if 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](#) as soon as possible so we can start processing your grant payment. Once completed, your grant payment may take up to 120 days to receive. Read your [Grant Award email](#) thoroughly, as it will have instructions on how to register with Oceans State Procures and how

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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, 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-acknowledgment/>.
- **You must submit a brief final grant report to RISCA via the online grant system and have a 60-minute meeting with Todd.** GOS-O organizations will be required to file a simple final report each year (including the year in which they are up for full reapplication) that includes – but is not limited to:
 - Budget documents and financial information from their most recently completed fiscal year.
 - Evidence of RISCA acknowledgement on marketing materials.

Each organization will be required to have an annual site visit with RISCA's Organizations Program Director. This site visit replaces the narrative questions in the final report. The site visit will either be a visit to an organization's physical space, an in-person meeting at a different location, a Zoom call, or a small group conversation that includes other GOS organizations. These meetings will last approximately 60 minutes and will be an opportunity to share with the Organizations Program Director what the organization has accomplished over the previous year and what they plan for the year to come, along with any issues or concerns they are confronting.

The final report filed by the organization combined with the Organizations Program Director's site visit notes act as the final report for the fiscal year. (The State of Rhode Island's fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30).

- **You must keep records of receipts and expenditures related to the funded.** 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.
- **You must notify Todd 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 needs to be cleared by Todd 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.

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Prior to reapplication, are there any requirements for ongoing participation in the program by GOS-O awardees?

Substantive changes to an organization’s mission, scope of programming, or organizational structure may necessitate a review at any time by RISCA staff to determine ongoing eligibility. It is the responsibility of the organization to inform RISCA staff of such changes when they occur. Financial malfeasance (meaning intentional deception or fraud) will result in immediate ejection from the program.

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

All 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:

- **STEP 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!”).
- **STEP 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.

Glossary

A special thanks to our colleagues at the City of Seattle Office of Arts and Culture and Grantmakers in the Arts whose fantastic work informed some of the definitions in this glossary.

Arts and Culture Organization: Not-for-profit based groups that provide as their primary mission regular cultural programs or services, which may include producing or presenting a series or regular program of performances, educational programming, exhibitions, media presentations, festivals, readings, or literary publications. Producing is a primary focus on direct creation, production, performance or exhibition of arts; presenting is a primary focus on organizing, selecting or curating and contracting a series, season or festival of performances or events created by other artists and producing groups.

Not-for-profit organizations that include arts and culture as a primary and major focus of a larger mission may apply, if their larger mission is centered in serving a specific cultural group.

BIPOC: an acronym that stands for “Black, Indigenous, and people of color.” The term BIPOC is meant to “emphasize the particular hardships faced by Black and Indigenous people in the US and Canada – especially because Indigenous people often get forgotten in social justice causes and that anti-Black racism is particularly virulent.” (dictionary.com)

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BIPOC centered organizations: A BIPOC centered organization is an organization with a mission and programming that is explicitly reflective of a community or communities of color, and where the board, staff, artists, and collaborators, include a significant representation of that community. A BIPOC-centered organization is defined by the following organizational characteristics:

- Primary mission, intentions, and practices are BY, FOR, and ABOUT art, heritages, histories, cultures and communities of color.
- Executive Leader (Executive Director, Managing Director, Producing Artistic Director, CEO, President) identifies as BIPOC.
- Board is at least 60% BIPOC-identifying individuals, per the definition above.
- Staff is at least 60% BIPOC-identifying individuals, per the definition above.

Culturally specific organization: an organization with a significant arts and cultural program that engages a specific cultural community but might not have arts and culture as their primary mission. Many of these organizations were established to address the needs and desires communities that were historically (and in many cases continuously) marginalized from receiving equitable access to existing programs. Many of these non-arts organizations evolved to support their communities in holistic ways and as a result developed significant and meaningful arts and cultural programs to better address the needs of their communities.

Diverse: composed of distinct qualities and characteristics; age, color, ethnicity, ancestry, sex, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental disability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, citizenship status and other characteristics that make individuals unique.

Equity: The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

Inclusion: The act of creating an environment in which every person feels welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming place embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people, where each person is able to share the full spectrum of their humanity and be seen and heard without fear.

Institutional Racism: Institutional racism, or systemic racism, describes societal patterns and structures that impose oppressive or otherwise negative conditions on identifiable groups on the basis of race or ethnicity (wikipedia.com). It is a form of racism that is embedded as normal practice within society or an organization. It can lead to such issues as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, and education, among other issues (thoughtco.com). In arts and culture funding, institutional racism has led to the historic exclusion and undervaluing of BIPOC communities and individuals, and an inequitable distribution of philanthropic dollars. To learn more, see the study [Not Just Money: Where is the Money Going?](#) by the Helicon Collaborative.

Geographic Community: the constituents who live in the geographic service area of an organization, as defined by an organization's location and (perhaps) their mission and vision. Depending on an organization's mission, their geographic community might be different or the same as their organizational community. Descriptions of the community should include demographic and geographic makeup, including information about relevant socioeconomic factors, as well as diversity of age, ethnicity, race, gender, ability, education, etc.

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Organizational Community: the constituents an organization engages or intends to engage as directed by their mission and vision. This community should include audience members, artists, students, and other groups that are significant to the organization. Depending on an organization's mission, their geographic community might be different or the same as their organizational community. Descriptions of the community should include demographic and geographic makeup, including information about relevant socioeconomic factors, as well as diversity of age, ethnicity, race, gender, ability, education, etc.

Practicing Artist: 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.