



Rhode Island State Council on the Arts
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RISCA ARTS ACCESS GRANT GUIDELINES

RISCA's [Arts Access Grant \(AAG\)](#) program provides small grants (maximum of \$5,000) to new ventures, occasional arts programs, or arts and cultural organizations that do not meet the [Investments In Arts & Culture \(IAC\)](#) eligibility requirements. Organizations that receive grants in IAC will not be eligible to apply for support in the AAG category, or in our Project Grants for Individuals or Education categories.

The Arts Access Grant provides program support to arts organizations across Rhode Island that contribute to the vitality of our communities, the economy of our state, the education of all Rhode Islanders, and our quality of life. Organizations must demonstrate excellent artistic, educational, and cultural value, as well as engagement with their community. As a rule, programs should be geared to a broad and diverse audience.

Organizations seeking AAG support will apply online at <http://www.arts.ri.gov/org-apply>.

Potential applicants are highly encouraged to speak with RISCA staff ahead of submitting an application. Please contact Adrienne Adeyemi, Grants to Organizations Program Director, at 401-222-3882 or adrienne.adeyemi@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.

Any hard copy support materials must be *received at the RISCA offices* by this time. Postmarks do not apply; materials postmarked by the deadline date but received on a later date will not be counted as part of your application.

Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

One application per cycle will be accepted from each organization applying in this category.

Eligibility

Grantees in RISCA's Investments in Arts & Culture (IAC) category are not eligible to apply for AAG support. IAC grantees also may not 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 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](#))
- A non-exempt, Rhode Island-based organization using a fiscal sponsor that fits the above requirements (see following paragraph for further detail)

Organizations that have not yet received the appropriate IRS tax-exempt determination 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 forms.

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

Parent corporations and fiscal sponsors must not be grantees of any other RISCA program.

Funding Considerations

The following conditions for funding apply to all Arts Access Grant applicants:

The maximum grant award in this category is \$5,000. Be aware that grants are frequently awarded at less than the requested amount.

Organizations, fiscal sponsors, and parent corporations may only submit one application per cycle to RISCA for AAG support. All applicants, however, are encouraged to collaborate as partners on other RISCA-funded projects.

All Arts Access Grants require a dollar-for-dollar cash match. In other words, your request to RISCA cannot exceed 50% of your cash income; each dollar granted by RISCA must be matched by a dollar of cash income from another source. In-Kind contributions may not be applied to the match requirement.

Grants awarded by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts 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 the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts 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.

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:

- Bricks and mortar activities and capital improvements, or for the purchase of permanent equipment
- Eliminating or reducing existing debt, or for contributions to an endowment fund
- Fundraising efforts, such as social events or benefits
- Prizes and awards
- Hospitality expenses, such as food and beverages for openings or receptions. Under no circumstances will the purchase of alcoholic beverages be supported
- Expenses incurred or activities occurring prior to July 1 or after June 30 in the fiscal year in which the grant has been awarded
- Applications where the purpose is to “regrant” or award funds using some or all of the RISCA grant funds
- Activities which are part of a graduate or undergraduate degree program, or for which academic credit is received
- Applications for projects that proselytize or promote religious activities, or which take place as part of a religious service
- Performances and exhibitions not available to the general public, or which are inaccessible to people with disabilities

Review Process

The application review process follows approximately this schedule:

- Applications are due by 11:59 pm on April 1 and October 1
- Applications are checked by staff for accuracy and completeness, and then prepared for review by an advisory panel
- Applications are sent to the panelists and are read and ranked online
- The review panel meets to determine their final funding recommendations
- Funding recommendations go to the Council for their review and approval
- Notification of grant awards will be made within eight to ten weeks of the application deadline

Be aware that there is no guarantee that the process will move according to this schedule, and it may take more time to review and award grants at certain times of the year.

Once a grant has been awarded, applicants should understand that the grant processing procedure is lengthy. In some 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

All AAG applications will go through a panel review process. Panelists will be selected for their ability to provide diverse viewpoints within the arts as well as broad demographic representation. Panelists evaluate applications based on published evaluation criteria and propose recommendations to the Council, which makes all final funding decisions.

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

Artistic Merit (50%)

Programs and participating artists are of high artistic quality. The projects are designed to expand the public or students' knowledge of and appreciation for an art form. Support materials are 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; and how the applicant will go about organizing, managing and evaluating the project. Budgets are clear, detailed, and accurate. 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/Community Engagement (25%)

The Arts Council seeks to foster a strong, vibrant Rhode Island arts community that is diverse in its public offerings and provides the people of this state with the greatest public benefit possible. The Council intends to support applicants that make significant contributions to one or more of the following areas:

- Employing, engaging, or presenting RI artists, or producing/presenting their works
- Producing or presenting new works of art or works that strive to make significant contributions to the advancement of the art form
- Promoting heritage and cultural diversity and diversifying cultural participation
- Implementing arts education as a core subject area, education reform inclusive of the arts, and life-long learning in and through the arts
- Encouraging access to and participation in the arts by persons in underserved areas
- Promoting accessibility to the arts for people with disabilities (all applicants must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and make their programs accessible to all)
- Expanding the number and breadth of partnerships that work to make the arts a vital part of community life and extend the reach of arts projects
- Making the arts a vital part of economic development and cultural tourism

Letters of support from participants and supporters are encouraged with all applications.

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 <http://www.nea.gov/resources/Accessibility/Planning/BriefChecklist.PDF> 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 Arts Access Grant application form via <http://www.arts.ri.gov/org-apply>, 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 Adrienne Adeyemi, Grants to Organizations Program Director, at 401-222-3882 or adrienne.adeyemi@arts.ri.gov.

A guide to the Arts Access grant application questions can be found at www.arts.ri.gov/grants/aagappguide.pdf.

Support Materials

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 upload a Word or PDF document containing links to the appropriate material.

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 list the title, medium, dimensions, year of completion, duration, etc. where applicable. 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 trouble uploading media online you may email media files to adrienne.adeyemi@arts.ri.gov or DVDs and CDs can be sent to the RISCA offices by the deadline date.

All support materials not uploaded to the online system must arrive at the RISCA offices by the deadline date.

Grant Award Requirements

Recipients must acknowledge their RISCA support in a prominent manner in all materials and announcements, both audio and visual, related to the performance, exhibition, etc. mounted as a result of their support from RISCA. Recipients must also display, in a prominent manner, the RISCA logo in association with the acknowledgment. Further detail regarding acknowledgment can be found at <http://www.arts.ri.gov/grants/pr.php>.

Grant recipients are also encouraged to post events in Rhode Island that present their work (grant related and otherwise) to the RISCA Arts Calendar at: <http://www.visitrhodeisland.com/what-to-see/the-arts-calendar/submit-an-event/>

Final Report

All organizations are required to submit a final report detailing their activities over the previous year within 30 days of the completion of the project or by no later than July 31, whichever comes first.

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 completion of the grant period.

Limits of Liability

The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts is not responsible for damage or loss of materials submitted to its office, whether or not such damage or loss is caused by negligence of the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, its employees, or agents.

All supporting materials submitted must be duplications of work. No original or single editions of works will be accepted.

Support Materials will be mailed back to an applicant only if a self-addressed, stamped envelope with sufficient postage is provided (with the exception of manuscripts which will not be returned). Support Materials from applications without a self-addressed stamped envelope will be held for sixty (60) days following the award decision and may be picked up during normal business hours, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, at the Council offices. See the Assurances section at the end of the AAG application for additional information on RISCA's use of support materials from funded projects.