

# STATE CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS

## GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS

2015



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**STATE CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS: GUIDELINES**

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## Introduction:

In 2014 Rhode Island voters approved bond issues to fund a “Creative and Cultural Economy Bond” initiative that provided \$5 million for an historic preservation grant program operated by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission and a \$30 million cultural facilities bond initiative operated by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (“RISCA” or “the Council”). Of this \$30 million, approximately \$23.1 million goes to support capital projects at nine specific arts and cultural organizations located throughout the state. The approximately \$6.9 million remaining goes to support capital improvement, preservation and renovation projects for public and nonprofit artistic, performance centers, historic sites, museums and cultural art centers located throughout the State of Rhode Island. These guidelines and instructions are based on regulations adopted by the Council and provide information on the review, evaluation, award, and administration of these grants. The text of the regulations is available at <http://www.arts.ri.gov/sfcg>

The State Cultural Facilities Grant Program (SCFG) was created because state lawmakers and voters recognized that many significant cultural properties in our state need extensive repairs or restoration, and that these organization contribute significantly to the state and local economy. These facilities and the organizations that enliven them contribute to the quality of life in Rhode Island and insure that our arts and cultural activities continue to inspire new generations. Moreover, the arts and cultural sector creates jobs, stimulates tourism, and builds and revitalizes our downtowns, neighborhoods and communities throughout the state.

The State Cultural Facilities Grant Program is a matching grant program. It promotes careful planning for capital improvement, preservation and renovation projects for public and nonprofit artistic, performance centers, historic sites, museums and cultural art centers located around the state. Through its matching requirements, the program stimulates broader support and participation in cultural facility projects statewide. Applications for the 2015 grant round (approximately \$2.5 million) will be due on October 1, 2015. Applicants will be notified of grant decisions by December 31, 2015. We anticipate additional rounds in 2016 (\$2.0 million) and 2017 (\$2.0 million).

The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts is a state agency supported by appropriations from the Rhode Island General Assembly and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. RISCA provides grants, technical assistance and staff support to arts organizations and artists, schools, community centers, social service organizations and local governments to bring the arts into the lives of Rhode Islanders. Created in 1967, the agency is governed by a thirteen member Council appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, and its programs are managed by a professional staff which includes artists and arts administrators.

*Please read and follow all instructions closely.*

RISCA will hold an **informational session** for SCFG applicants at 1pm on Monday, July 20, 2015 in Conference Room A on the second floor of One Capitol Hill in Providence. This meeting is a good opportunity to learn about the SCFG program and to pick up advice on submitting an application.

**Eligible Applicants:**

You are eligible to apply for a State Cultural Facilities Grant if you are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit cultural organizations which leases or owns your own performance or exhibition space. A cultural organization is defined as an organization that is formed for the purpose of developing and promoting the work of artists in various visual and performing art forms such as music, dance, theatre, film, sculpture, painting, photography and the visual arts, multimedia, poetry, and performance art.

City or state facilities cannot apply directly for support, but nonprofit entities operating in city owned structures are eligible to apply for identified areas within these structures specifically designated for the production, presentation and exhibition of the arts.

If you are one of the nine “named recipient” of Creative and Cultural Economy Bonds funds identified by law, you are only eligible to apply for additional support if the project for which those funds were designated has been completed and closed out. If the applicant received a previous State Cultural Facilities Grant or State Preservation Grant, the applicant must have completed and closed out or made substantial progress towards completion of the project in order to be eligible for an additional State Cultural Facilities Grant.

Applications will not be accepted from private individuals, for-profit organizations, or corporations. Applicants may submit one application in each grant round. Applications for projects that include some activities to be funded by the State Preservation Grant program and other activities to be funded by the State Cultural Facilities Grant program will be considered.

**Ownership status:**

- Applicants must own or operate the property for which the grant is sought.
- Applicants who lease space will be required to provide a document, signed by lessor and lessee, indicating they will enter into a lease or written agreement of at least 10 years from the date of the award or a 5-year lease with options that comprise a full 10-year period in the event a grant is awarded. No application will be considered without such written assurance, and no grant will be awarded without a signed lease or written agreement as described above.

**What we fund:**

The law establishing this program authorizes the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts to administer a matching grant program "for capital improvement, preservation and renovation projects for public and nonprofit artistic, performance centers, historic sites, museums and cultural art centers located throughout the State of Rhode Island." Historic sites will also be supported through a matching grant program administered by the Rhode Island Historical and Preservation Commission. For more information about that program go to <http://www.preservation.ri.gov/grants/spg.php>

In accordance with the law, the SCFG program will support projects designed “for capital improvement, preservation and renovation projects for public and nonprofit artistic, performance centers and cultural art centers located throughout the State of Rhode Island.” In doing so, RISCA defines a “cultural facility” as “a building which shall be used primarily for the programming,

production, presentation, exhibition of any of the arts and cultural disciplines. These disciplines include music, dance, theatre, creative writing, literature, architecture, painting, sculpture, folk arts, photography, crafts, media arts, visual arts, and programs of museums. Civic buildings and libraries are not considered cultural facilities, but identified areas within these structures specifically designated for the production, presentation and exhibition of the arts may be eligible for support.”

### **What we will NOT fund:**

The following will not be eligible for support through the SCFG program:

- Projects whose entire scope of work consists solely of general maintenance.
- Projects that consist only of landscaping or site work as part of improvements such as parking lots, sidewalks, etc.
- Projects that consist only of predevelopment or planning, such as historic structure reports, master plans, and architectural studies.
- Acquisition of collections.
- New construction.
- General Operating Expenses (GOS). Administrative costs for running the organization (including but not limited to salaries, travel, personnel, office supplies, mortgage or rent, operating overhead or indirect costs, etc.)
- Costs associated with representation, proposal, or grant application preparation
- Costs for lobbying or attempting to influence federal, state or local legislation, the judicial branch, or any state agency
- Costs associated with bad debts, contingencies (money set aside for possible expenses), fines and penalties, taxes (of any kind), and other financial costs including bank fees and charges and credit card debts, except costs related to debt service for the designated project.
- Costs for travel, private entertainment, food, beverages, plaques, awards, or scholarships
- Projects restricted to private or exclusive participation, including restriction of access to programs on the basis of sex, race, creed, national origin, disability, age, or marital status
- Re-granting, contributions, and donations.

### **What we encourage:**

- Projects that remove barriers to the attendance and participation of people with disabilities, such as projects that ensure greater wheelchair access to cultural facilities, as well as the acquisition of equipment for captioning, audio description and assistive listening.
- Projects where applicants can demonstrate that the funded project will have a positive impact on employment and the local economy once the capital improvement, restoration or renovation is completed.

## **The Application Process**

### **Number of applications per deadline**

An eligible applicant may only submit one application in each grant application round.

Organizations that have previously received a State Cultural Facility Grant are eligible to apply for an additional grant once their first project has been completed and closed out.

### **Number of applications per project**

Applications for grants in the later phases of capital projects are welcome. Organizations that have received a State Cultural Facility Grant or a State Preservation Grant may apply for additional phases once their first project has been completed and closed out.

### **Matching Dollar requirements**

All funds are to be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis. For the SCFG program, 25% of the match may be in-kind contribution of goods and services, and no more than 10% of the matching funds may be used to pay a member of the grantee organization for time devoted to managing the project. Matching funds must be in cash or documented contributions and binding pledges or financing commitments [such as construction funding from tax credit programs] or loan documents. Funds appropriated by the State of Rhode Island or previously awarded through either the State Cultural Facilities Grant Program or State Preservation Grants may not be counted as part of the Match. Matching funds may NOT include operating funds.

Matching funds may be expended in advance; however, State funds may only be expended on activity occurring after a Grant Award Agreement is fully executed.

### **Request and Award amounts**

Applicants may request up to \$250,000 per application per deadline unless they have received prior approval from the Council to exceed that maximum grant amount. Those seeking approval must submit a Letter of Intent (see below) prior to August 1, 2015. The Council will review and respond to this request by no later than September 1, 2015. Approval of a request to exceed the maximum grant amount does not constitute a commitment to fund at the requested level.

Applicants should be aware that it is RISCA's intention to award grants that maximize the economic and cultural development potential of SCFG grants, but some grants will not be awarded at the requested amount. It is also RISCA's intent to ensure the broadest possible geographic distribution of grants throughout the state.

### **Submitting an Application**

RISCA accepts and evaluates grants through an online application system. In order to use the system applicants must register and then login to complete the application form and upload supporting documents and material.

### **Registering for an account on RISCA's online application system**

Go to <http://www.arts.ri.gov/scfg-apply> to register on RISCA's online application system. Click on the CREATE NEW ACCOUNT button and fill in the required information. Once you have registered you will be able to access and start work on the application.

### **Letter of Intent**

Applicants are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) **by no later than September 1, 2015**, briefly describing their project and the amount they intend to request. This helps us plan for the October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.

Applicants who intend to request a grant in excess of the \$250,000 maximum award are **REQUIRED** to submit a Letter of Intent by no later than August 1, 2015. In this LOI the applicant

shall describe the economic benefits that will result from your project should it be supported at the higher amount.

The Letter of Intent is submitted via RISCA's online application system.

### **Online application**

The online application will gather the information panelists need to fully evaluate the project and its impact on the community. Questions will seek information that allows the panel to evaluate each application based on the criteria listed below (see Evaluation Criteria section).

In addition, the law requires RISCA to take into account financial need, the availability or actual expenditure of matching funds for the projects, available gifts or grants for projects, the amount of square footage to be improved, the geographical location and characteristics of audiences benefitted.

### **Support Material**

Support material will include the following items:

- Copy of IRS 501 (c) 3 tax exemption letter
- Documents of unrestricted use: Deed, title, property tax statement to document unrestricted use, OR Executed copy of lease and written explanation of any easements, covenants, or other conditions to document unrestricted use.
- Financial documents to include the most recent copy of the applicant's IRS 990 form, along with an audit, review, or compilation for the most recently completed fiscal year.
- Income statement and balance sheet or other financial report for the current year-to-date
- Board list and affiliations
- Resumes, CVs, or other summaries of qualifications for all key project personnel (e.g., project manager and/or general contractor, architect, fundraising consultant, key organizational staff).
- Most recent copy of Rhode Island Cultural Data Project's Funder's report, if available
- An 8.5 x 11 inch reduction of current architectural plans
- Timeline for your project, including the scope-of-work accompanied by dates
- Local support documentation, including up to 6 letters of support from local officials and community groups, or a list of officials with signatures.

Optional Support material such as:

- Photographs (original or electronic on CD)
- Supplemental or expanded budgets
- Flyers, brochures
- Newspaper articles
- Plans for sustainable design, etc.

### **The Review of Applications**

Applications will first be reviewed by RISCA staff to ensure basic eligibility and completeness. Eligible applications will then be released to a review panel, which will evaluate each application based on the three review criteria. They will then assign a score which will determine the funding

recommendation. The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts board will then review and approve the results of the panel meeting.

### **Review Panel**

The Council shall appoint a seven-member panel of experts to review applications. Members of the Review Panel may be selected from among artists, arts administrators, managers of cultural facilities, individuals with experience in construction and capital projects or other experts. In making appointments to the Review Panel, the Council shall endeavor to include an architect or design professional and an economic development professional. In addition, a representative of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission staff will serve to promote inter-agency cooperation and participation. The Council will ensure that members come from different parts of the state, represent diverse communities and have knowledge or experience with organizations of different sizes. RISCA will ensure that no panel member shall have a conflict of interest with any application under review. In order to represent the evaluations of the Council's professional staff, the RISCA Executive Director shall be a voting member of the Review Panel.

### **Panel Meeting**

All Review Panel meetings and records shall be consistent with the Open Meetings Law (Chapter 42-46 of the Rhode Island General Laws of 1956, as amended) and the Public Records Act (Chapter 36-1 of the Rhode Island General Laws of 1956, as amended). Notices of meetings and agendas will be posted electronically on the Secretary of State's website not less than forty-eight (48) hours prior to each meeting.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Each eligible application will be evaluated on the following competitive criteria (100 points total):

(1) **NEED FOR PROJECT** (30 points): 1-30 points will rate the need for the proposed capital improvement, preservation or renovation based on a review of the scope of work, the project narrative and supporting documents. Applicants will be judged on the quality and completeness of their plans, and on the strength of the case they make for how the capital improvement, preservation or renovation will advance the work of the organization and their community.

(2) **PROJECT IMPACT** (40 points): 1-40 points will rate the completed project's ability to contribute to the local and/or state economy, to the cultural vitality of the applicant's community as well as the ability to engage current and potential audiences. The geographic location of the project will be a consideration. Impact on underserved parts of the applicant's community will also be a consideration (for example, projects that deal with accessibility issues to engage audiences with disabilities, or the ability to develop new programs to connect with culturally diverse communities). Applicants will be judged on the strength of the case they make that their project will provide a significant and measurable benefit to the local and/or state economy and to the cultural vitality of the applicant's community. Applicants will be ranked, in part, on an evaluation of the data they provide that supports their case.

(3) **CAPACITY TO SUCCEED** (30 points): 1-30 points will rate the applicant's ability to raise matching funds, plan and carry out a project within a 12 to 24 month period. The panel will also take into account the long-term viability of the applicant organization. Projects that can demonstrate an ability to begin construction earlier than 12-months from the approval date will receive greater scores in the selection process. Applicants will be rated based on a review of project plans, budget

details, income and matching funds statements. A review of the applicant's organizational strength and capacity to succeed will include an evaluation of past financial records and reports, as well as an evaluation of fund-raising capacity as demonstrated by a review of past earned and contributed income to the organization.

### **Selection of Grants and Grant Announcement**

The Review Panel shall submit its recommendations to the Council within forty-five (45) days of its application review meeting. The Council will review the recommendations of the Review Panel within forty-five (45) days of receiving the recommendations. The Commission shall vote to accept or reject the recommendations. The date of the Council's vote shall be the date of grant award.

We anticipate that grants will be announced by the end of the December, to coincide with the State Preservation grant announcements of the Rhode Island Historical and Preservation Commission.

### **Considerations for the Successful Applicant**

#### **Historic Preservation review**

In accordance with the regulations of the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Act, projects at historic properties must be reviewed by the RIHPHC. An "historic property" is defined as "any district, site, building, structure, or object listed in the State Register," a list compiled and maintained by RIHPHC. State regulations direct that the State shall not fund any activity "which will encroach upon, damage or destroy, physically, visually, or environmentally, any site, building, place, landmark, or area included in the state register without first obtaining the advice of the Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission."

Applications for projects that include historic properties will be shared with the RIHPHC for their review, and RISCA will be guided by their advisories. Applicants are encouraged to consult with RIHPHC prior to applying.

#### **State regulations regarding Minority and Women Owned Businesses**

Under Rhode Island General law 37-14.1, Minority business enterprises are targeted for participation in all state-funded construction projects (including soft costs) and shall be awarded a minimum of ten percent (10%) of all dollar value of the procurement or project.

The Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program is a State of Rhode Island program that promotes the State's policy of supporting the fullest possible participation of firms owned and controlled by minorities and women in state funded and directed public construction programs and projects. The State of Rhode Island maintains a directory of vendors eligible for MBE participation at <http://www.mbe.ri.gov/search.php>, and will work with any SCFG recipient to ensure compliance with the law.

#### **Prevailing Wage**

In accordance with the law, any contracts for construction entered into for a project funded by the State Cultural Facilities Grant program shall be in compliance with the State of Rhode Island prevailing wage law (RIGL 37-13-1). For more information go to <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/pw/pdfs/prevwagebrochure.pdf>

**Changes in Project Scope or Budget**

Any material changes in project scope or of a variance of 20% or more of total budget must receive approval by RISCA in order to receive further funding.

**Reporting Requirements**

The General Assembly and the Public approved the SCFG program as an economic development initiative, so all funded organizations are required to participate in a yearly economic impact survey and report. Information to be gathered will include, among other things, employment information before, during and after construction, changes in staffing, programs and services as a result of the capital project, and other information that can be used to assess the impact of this program.

**Acknowledgement of Funding**

Grant recipients are required to credit the Rhode Island General Assembly and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts in all print, audio, video, and internet materials, and all publicity materials (such as press releases, brochures, posters, advertisements, and web sites). Detailed information will be provided in the contract package mailed to grantees.

A project sign acknowledging funding by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts will be placed on site during the course of the project. The sign will be provided by the RISCA.

*For more information, refer to <http://www.arts.ri.gov/scfg/>.*