

Community Engaged Project Grant

Overview

- **Summary:** RISCA Community Engaged Project Grants (CEPG) provide grants of up to \$3,000 in support of arts and culture projects that directly and actively engage Rhode Island residents. Projects must be artist instigated and organized, outside of institutional support and structures. Open to projects of all arts disciplines, from artists and creatives of all levels, these experiences should welcome non- or new- artists to engage in making, experiencing, or learning about art as an active participant. The project should directly benefit the public in Rhode Island and/or engage a specific Rhode Island community. A deep impact on a small number of people is equally as valuable as an event that many people attend.
- Award Amount: \$500 to \$3,000.
- Who can apply: Artists that live in Rhode Island.
- What can be funded: art projects that actively engage with non- or new- artists.

Deadlines and Funding Periods

The deadline to apply for Community Engaged Project Grant program is 11:59 p.m. on:

- **April 1.** This deadline supports projects occurring between July 1 and December 31. For applicants applying at the April 1 deadline, award notification might not occur until after July 1, as we are prohibited from making award announcements until one week after the state budget for the fiscal year (which starts July 1) is enacted.
- **October 1.** This deadline supports projects occurring between January 1 and June 30.

If a deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be 11:59 p.m. on the next business day. Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Note: The application portal closes at 11:59 p.m., so you must hit submit before that time for your application to be considered.

Definition of Project and Example Projects

RISCA defines a project as a discrete set of connected activities with a defined beginning and an end. Projects may be one-time events like a festival, show, or exhibition, or a defined series of events such as a roster of classes or series of performances. Projects with multiple components must show that there is a cohesive theme connecting the components together.

The kinds of things this program funds are broad, so it can be as responsive as possible to what communities want or need over time. Core to all funded programs is a connection and value to the community being engaged with, fulfilling RISCA's charge to facilitate a meaningful cultural life for all Rhode Island residents. This grant is for projects that actively engage non- or new-artists as a participant and take place outside of a traditional arts space.

- **Example One:** Name Namerson will lead weekly artmaking days at the Central Library in Warwick, for youth ages 8-12. These making days will include gentle instruction, a wide variety of materials, and space to imagine. These classes will be in the afternoons, and free to all participants and their caregivers.
- **Example Two:** Three artists will collaborate to create an interactive performance, featuring dance, music and spoken word. This piece will be performed in Kennedy Plaza and is about how Providence residents use transit. Creation will include observation and interviews of folks using the transit hub, and the performance will be engaging, short, and created with a non-captive audience of folks that will be moving around in mind.
- **Example Three:** Screen printing in the park! People of all ages will be invited to bring blank anything (posters, t-shirts, canvas bags) to screen print under the guidance of artist Name Namerson. Name will provide templates that celebrate the history of the city of Woonsocket, and the state of Rhode Island. This will happen on three Saturdays over the summer, in River Island Art Park.

Eligibility

To be eligible, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Not currently be enrolled in an arts degree seeking program or attending high school full time.
- Have been domiciled in Rhode Island for at least one year at the time of application. This means your home in Rhode Island is your primary residence, and is the address you use for legal forms, state income taxes, car registration, driver's license or state issued identification, and voter registration - regardless of whether you own or rent your home.
- Be a legal resident of the United States with a tax id number (either Social Security number or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number). This includes refugees, immigrants, and temporary residents. This does not include people in the country on a tourist visa.
- Not be a staff member or Council member of RISCA, or an immediate family member of a staff or Council member.

Other rules/things to know

- The maximum grant award in this category is \$3,000. You can apply for any amount between \$500 and \$3,000 – we strongly encourage you to apply for the least amount of

funding you need to do this project. Money is limited, and we want to be able to support as many artists as possible.

- No partial grants will be awarded – meaning you will either receive the full amount you apply for or no funding.
- Only one application per grant deadline per grant program. An individual may only submit one application per grant deadline to the Community Engaged Project Grant program. You may only receive one CEPG per fiscal year, and if you are a current recipient of the General Operating Support for Artists grant you are ineligible to apply.
- 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 residents of Rhode Island. For that reason, awardees must credit RISCA on all material where funders and supporters are listed and on all printed programs.
- All RISCA grant awards are contingent upon the availability of funds from the Rhode Island State General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. Sometimes delays in passing the state budget will delay grant award notifications and processing of grant payments – we can't award grants if we don't know for sure we will have funds.
- Grant applications are considered on a competitive basis. Your application may meet all the eligibility criteria and be incredibly meaningful. But remember that there are anywhere between 40 and 70 other applications in an application cycle that are also amazing! Because of the many high-quality projects, panels *always* wish to award more grant awards than they are able with the funds available – this is one reason applicants who apply for the support for the same project year after year may not always receive a grant award, and that the grant award amounts may vary in amount cycle to cycle.
- The project must be artist-instigated and implemented. This project cannot be part of a nonprofit or business's operations or projects. This project must be taking place outside of the support and structure of a larger, more formal entity. You can receive in-kind donations from formal entities (like donated rehearsal space or materials), but the project must not be a program of the other entity. The applicant must be the primary force behind the project, though we actively invite groups of artists/collaborators to apply under a lead applicant.
- This project may not receive other funding from RISCA in the same fiscal year. There cannot be another application to support this project or aspects of this project through another RISCA granting program, including General Operating Support for Organizations.
- All project activities must take place within the state of Rhode Island.

Funding Restrictions

If you receive a grant award, it can be used for expenses related to your project and its production or presentation, as well as marketing and accessibility efforts. This includes paying any artists or arts administrators involved for their time, including the applicant. You will use the grant for the expenses you planned for in the budget you submitted. We understand that this budget is just a plan, and that you may spend the funds in slightly different ways. This is ok,

you just need to inform RISCA staff once your program is complete.

There are many things your grant awards cannot be used for. Because RISCA grants money from the National Endowment for the Arts, we are obligated to follow these rules set forth by the NEA. Expenses that cannot be covered by your grant award:

- **Programs that occur in spaces that are not ADA compliant.** Persons with disabilities have the right to access all RISCA-funded programs. If the place your project is taking place does not meet any one of the standards of the ADA, you are ineligible for RISCA funding.
- **Capital projects.** The construction or renovation of buildings or additions to buildings.
- Any **fundraising** expenses – like creating rewards for a Kickstarter or hosting a fundraising event for any purpose.
- **Prizes and awards.** You may not spend funds on a prize or award for another event/person/organization.
- **Alcohol and some Hospitality Expenses.** Purchase of alcohol with grant funds is strictly prohibited. You may not spend funds on any other food or beverage unless it is integral to the project – please contact RISCA staff with specific questions. You may not spend grant funds on hospitality, travel, or food and beverage expenses if it was not described in the budget you submitted with your application.
- **Expenses outside of award period.** Your grant award can't be used to cover expenses incurred or activities occurring outside of the award period. For applications submitted at the April 1 deadline, the award period is July 1-December 31 of that year. For applications submitted at the October 1 deadline, the award period is January 1- June 30th of the next year.
- **Regranting funds.** You may not use these grant funds to support grants to other artists or organizations through an application or award process.
- **Undergraduate or graduate school activities.** You may not use these grant funds for activities which are part of a graduate or undergraduate degree program, or for which academic credit is received.
- **Religious activities.** You may not use these grant funds for projects that proselytize or promote religious activities, or which take place as part of a religious service.
- **Private functions.** You may not use these grant funds for any programming that is not available/accessible to the public.

Evaluation Criteria

The three review criteria are

Community Impact and Engagement (50%)

- Project incorporates active, two-way, and meaningful engagement with the participants.
- Project has a clearly defined target audience, and estimated participation is reasonable.
- Project has direct and deep relevance to the creative experience and/or cultural heritage of that community.

- Creates opportunities for all Rhode Island residents to participate in the arts, particularly persons in under-resourced geographic communities, and/or historically and/or continuously marginalized populations.
- This project directly relates to and serves residents of the state of Rhode Island.

Feasibility/Likelihood of Success (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.
 - how the applicant will go about organizing, managing, and evaluating the project.
- Budgets are clear, detailed, and accurate; the planned allocation of funds supports project goals.
- 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.

Artistic Vibrancy and Intention (25%)

- Demonstrates ability to provide an excellent and intentional experience for the participants.
- This artist or group of artists can provide relevant and respectful engagement with the identified community.
- Project directly supports creation of art by, for, and with a specific community.
- Project provides opportunities to participate in art experiences that are either not available or currently difficult to access for the identified audience.
- Demonstrates a likelihood of a compelling and successful community-based project using the applicant’s artistic approach and process.

Support Materials

You are required to submit a budget and a timeline, using the provided templates. You MUST use the templates, and upload as either excel or PDF.

- [Budget template](#)
- [Timeline template](#)

You may submit up to 10 support materials, along with a website if you have one, and an artist bio, resume or cv. All support materials are optional, but strongly recommended. The support materials should help tell the story of your application and be directly related to the project you are proposing.

- **Website:** The website will be submitted as a link and should be to the website of either the lead artist applicant or the project.
- **Bio/Resume/CV:** The artist bio, resume, or cv will need to be submitted as either a word document or PDF. Please submit whichever of the three, or a combination, that you feel best represents you.

- **Support Material List:** A numbered list of the materials you are submitting, with a one to two sentence description. This must be either a word doc or a PDF.
- **Support Materials:** Up to 10 attachments that tell the story of your application and relate to the review criteria. Examples of support materials can include artist resumes/CVs; images/video/audio of work by applicant and/or participating artists; letters of support from community members, past participants, project partners; marketing collateral for past projects. If you are submitting video or audio, please link to YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud in the text box and on the support material list. File formats you can directly upload to the application include JPG, PDF, Word, Excel. Please keep in mind that the panelists are reviewing up to 30 applications.

Review and Award Process

Panelists

Because RISCA is a state agency granting taxpayer funds, RISCA staff members do not make any funding decisions, grant panels do!

A typical review panel is made up of five people reviewing no more than 30 applications. This means in most cycles we have from 2 to 3 different panels making grant award decisions for CEPG. The panel is made up of five people:

- A minimum of two panel members will be BIPOC individuals (see definition in glossary).
- A minimum of one panel member will be a practicing artist (see definition in glossary).
- Two panelists will be people that are not directly engaged in the arts ecosystem – what the National Endowment for the Arts calls laypeople.
- All panelists either live or work in Rhode Island.

RISCA is committed to a peer review process that provides fresh and diverse input from an ever-changing 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 serve on a review panel three times over the course of a three years – which encompasses 6 grant cycles. Panelists cannot serve 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 small stipend of \$350 for their time and expertise.

Decision Making Process

- **STEP 1: panelists are recruited, and panels are assembled 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.
- **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: Applications are screened.** RISCA staff review each application for completeness and compliance with eligibility and submission requirements. If any issues are detected, the applicant may be contacted or asked to fix their application within a certain number of days.
- **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: Eligible applications are sent to the panel(s).** If more than one panel is needed, applications are randomly assigned to panels using a group randomizer program.
- **STEP 6: The panel(s) review and score their assigned applications.** Using the evaluation rubric for the program, panelists have typically from 4 to 6 weeks to review applications and score each application prior to their in-person panel meeting. We estimate that the panelists spend approximately 30 minutes reading and scoring each application.
- **STEP 7: Panel(s) meet for an all-day Panel Review and make funding recommendations.** The panel then meets in person at RISCA offices or via Zoom to discuss each application. Panels typically spend from 10 to 15 minutes discussing each application. After each discussion, panelists have the option of privately updating their scores. RISCA staff facilitate the discussion, but do not participate in or influence the discussions. RISCA staff take notes during the panel to share with applicants later. At the end of the day, 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.
- **STEP 8: Panel comments.** Based on the panel's discussion, RISCA staff collate and synthesize panelist feedback into panel comments. These panel comments are provided to every applicant, regardless of whether they are funded.
- **STEP 9: RISCA's Governing Council reviews and approves panel recommendations.**
- **STEP 10: Applicants are notified as to whether or not they have received a grant award!** For applicants applying at the April 1 deadline, they will be notified about their grant award status approximately 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 first week of July.

- **STEP 11: Awardees will thoroughly read and sign their grant award agreements, and register with Ocean State Procures (if necessary).** We cannot process your grant payment until you are an approved vendor of the State of Rhode Island (by registering with Ocean State Procures) with an approved W-9 form and you have signed your grant agreement form. Once those things are completed, applicants can assume it will take anywhere from 4 to 8 weeks to receive their grant payment. In many cases, grant funds may not be received prior to the start of a project. Applicants should be aware of this possibility and plan their cash flow accordingly.

Accepting the Grant and Processing the Award Payment

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 6-10 weeks to receive. Read your **Grant Award Email** thoroughly, as it will have instructions on how to register with Oceans State Procures and how to upload your W-9 to the state payment system.

Other things you will need to do:

- **You must acknowledge RISCA support** in a prominent manner in all materials and announcements, both audio and visual, related to the grant program. Grant recipients must also display, in a prominent manner, the RISCA logo in association with that acknowledgment. Further detail regarding acknowledgment can be found at [Acknowledging RISCA | RISCA](#).
- **You must submit a brief final grant report to RISCA via the online grant system.** All grantees are required to submit a brief final report no later than one month following the grant funding period. For grants awarded at the April 1 deadline, this will be January 31; for grants awarded at the October 1 deadline, this will be July 31. You will not be able to apply for another RISCA grant if you have an overdue final report.
- **You must keep records of receipts and expenditures related to the funding.** 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 RISCA of any significant changes in your project.** 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 RISCA staff 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.

Ocean State Procures

All 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](#) for complete details on to fully register and create a login to access your secure Vendor Portal at [R.I. Department of Purchases registration](#). Please note this is a 2-step process.

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

Declining a Grant Award

Before deciding to decline your grant award due to changing circumstances or any other reason, we recommend you reach out to RISCA staff to see if you can accomplish your project with some modifications. If you do decide to decline your award, this is totally fine to do so. It will have no bearing on future grant applications you might submit to RISCA. You will send an email to Mollie Flanagan, RISCA’s Individual Artists Program Director, indicating your desire to decline your award, and she will assist you.

Glossary

Practicing Artist: A person that intentionally creates or practices art in any discipline that:

- Has sought learning or 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 toward 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.

Rhode Island residency: Have been domiciled in Rhode Island for at least one year at the time of application. This means your home in Rhode Island is your primary residence, and is the address you use for legal forms, state income taxes, car registration, driver’s license or state issued id, and voter registration - regardless of whether you own or rent your home. You must reside in the state for at least 183 days per year.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/BIPOC>.