

Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship Grant Guidelines

Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowships provide support to individual (folk) artists who demonstrate the highest level of skill and accomplishments in their craft.

The Folk and Traditional Arts are defined as those artistic practices which are community or family-based and express that community's aesthetic heritage and tradition. The learning process is informal and is passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth, apprenticeship, and imitation.

All potential applicants to the Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship program must contact Elena Calderón-Patiño to discuss their application before the deadline. Applicants who need assistance completing an application and/or who require the assistance of an interpreter should contact Elena by email at Elena.Patino@Arts.RI.gov well in advance of the application deadline.

Information for first time applicants

If this is your first time applying for a grant from a RISCA, here are some things we want you to know before you get started:

- **RISCA staff are here to help you throughout the grant process.** We provide several grant support options, from one-on-one meetings to grant workshops (in person and online) to drop-in hours for last minute application support. Information about them can be found on each individual grant page. We also have pre-recorded grant workshops from past cycles and other helpful videos on our [YouTube Channel](#).
- **If possible, reach out to RISCA staff early if you would like one on one grant support.** You can always reach out to RISCA staff for one-on-one grant! As you can imagine, we get a high volume of requests and have a limited time for one-on-one meetings, particularly the week prior to the grant deadline. We recommend reaching out to the program director for the grant program you are interested in applying to early if you want to meet one on one. Program directors typically start scheduling meetings early February for the April deadline, and early August for the October deadline.
- **We recommend you read these grant guidelines more than once, as they will answer 95% of your questions.** That way, if and when you do talk to a program director, you can spend your time together focusing on your application. There are many exceptions to this piece of advice: if you need in a different language or are unable to read or process these guidelines due to a learning disability, then please feel to reach out the grant program director and they can assist you.
- **If you have a disability or are not comfortable writing or communicating in English, you may request accommodations.** Applicants who need assistance completing an application should contact the relevant program director in advance of the deadline. They can provide or coordinate whatever assistance you require. For individuals with learning disabilities for whom writing a grant is prohibitive, RISCA program directors can arrange for transcription

support if an applicant discloses their needs. For individuals who are not comfortable writing or communicating in English, program directors can arrange for the provision of translation support for your application. To allow for timely completion of your application, we recommend you notify the program director with your accommodation requests at least three weeks prior to the application deadline.

- **Our number one piece of grant writing advice: follow the directions and answer the questions asked directly.** The questions being asked in the grant applications are directly tied to the evaluation criteria and the evaluation rubric panelists will use when reviewing applications. This sounds obvious, but about half of the applications we receive don't do those two things.
- **RISCA staff can provide support beyond grants.** Managing grants is just one facet of what the program directors do at RISCA. We are charged with stewarding the arts and culture ecosystem in Rhode Island and responding to needs in the field. You can feel free to reach out with questions you have or ideas you want feedback on at any time. As a state arts agency, we offer learning programs and coordinate events and convenings to connect people together. [Check out our calendar of events.](#)

Deadline and Funding Periods

September 15, 2023

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 that the application portal closes at 11:59 p.m., so you must hit submit before that time for your application to be considered.

Eligibility

- You must be a United States citizen or Green Card holder and a current, legal resident of the State of Rhode Island. You must have established legal residence in Rhode Island for a minimum of twelve consecutive months prior to the date of application and you must be a current legal resident of the State of Rhode Island at the time that grant funds are disbursed. Rhode Island State Law (§44-30-5) defines a "resident" as someone "who is domiciled in this state" or "who is not domiciled in this state but maintains a permanent place of abode in this state and is in this state for an aggregate of more than one hundred eighty-three (183) days of the taxable year. If an individual selected for a grant award is no longer a resident of the State of Rhode Island when funds are to be disbursed, the grant award may be withdrawn. Applicants must be at least eighteen years of age. Students attending high school or students pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees in an arts discipline or an arts-related subject area at the time of application may not apply.
- Only one Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship application is allowed per person per deadline. Individuals may not apply for a Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship and a Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship at the same deadline.
- Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship applicants are ineligible to reapply for one fiscal year if they have received funding in this category.
- Past RISCA grant recipients may not reapply for RISCA funds unless all final reports for previous awards have been submitted.
- RISCA staff, Council and their spouses and immediate relatives are ineligible to apply for RISCA funds.

Funding Restrictions

RISCA support may Not be used for:

- Bricks and mortar activities, capital improvements, or the purchase of permanent equipment.
- Eliminating/reducing existing debt, or 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.
- 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 or awarding funds to another person or entity.
- 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.

Funding Requirements

The following conditions for funding apply to all Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship applicants:

- **One \$7,000 Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship Merit Award and one \$3,000 Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship Merit Award** will be granted each year. The Council reserves the right to increase or decrease either the amount or the number of awards granted in any given year.
- **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, Fellowship 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.
- **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.

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 equity and accessibility 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.

Evaluation Criteria:

Applications will be evaluated based on artistic quality, as defined by traditionality in the case of applicants for the Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship.

Quality and artistic merit of the folk and traditional artist. (75%)

Traditionalist and artistic merit of folk artist.

Extent of folk artist prior familiarity with the traditional art form.

Extent of folk artist's commitment to continuing the traditional art form.

Did the mentor folk artist demonstrate artistic excellence through submission of supporting materials? (25%)

Since panels assess Fellowship applications solely on the review of support materials such as manuscripts, images, recordings, and videos, applicants should submit the best quality support materials possible. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that support materials are prepared and submitted adequately to RISCA for panel review.

How to Apply

- Applicants must submit a completed Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship application. [Proceed to application.](#)
- Applications must include:
 - Applicant's cv or resume.
 - Applicant's biographical statement.
 - Required work samples as specified in the Support Material Requirements section of the application.
- Support materials must be submitted online by 11:59pm on day of deadline.

Support Material Requirements

Applicants should consult Elena Calderón-Patiño prior to beginning the application and during the application process for assistance in identifying and/or obtaining the appropriate support materials.

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.

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 go 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.
- Submissions should reflect the artist's most recent work, preferably work created within the last three years.

Review 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 three to five people reviewing no more than 30 applications.

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.**
- **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 apprenticeship.** 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 Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA) grant award recipients need to have an approved vendor profile in the Rhode Island Ocean State Procures (OSP) system. [The new online registration system](#) is used by the State of Rhode Island for any state vendor, not just those working with or receiving grant awards from RISCA. [Use the Vendor Self-Registration Quick Start Guide](#) for complete details on how to register and create a login to access your secure Vendor Portal at [the Division of Purchases](#). Please note this is a two-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 Elena Calderón Patiño, RISCA’s Director, Arts & Cultural Sustainability Program, Elena.Patino@arts.ri.gov indicating your desire to decline your award, and she will assist you.