

Community Engaged Project Grants

Community Engaged Project Grants (CEPG) support arts and culture projects that directly and actively engage the public in Rhode Island and/or a specific Rhode Island community. Projects must be artist instigated and organized outside of institutional support and structures. The grant is open to projects of all arts disciplines, from artists and creatives at all levels and must welcome non or new artists to engage in making, experiencing, or learning about art as an active participant. A project that has meaningful and robust engagement with a small group of people is equally as valuable as a one-time event many people attend.

Award Amount: Up to \$5,000.

Who can apply

- Artists that live in Rhode Island.

Timeline

- Grants open for applications on Feb. 1.
- Deadline is April 1 at 11:59 p.m.
- Funding period supports a project occurring between July 1 and June 30, the state's fiscal year.
- Grant notifications will be sent in mid-June (tentative).
- Final report is due the July 31 following the project period.

Project Definition and Examples

A project is defined as a set of connected activities with a distinct beginning and end. Projects can be one-time events such a festival, show, or exhibition, or a series such as a roster of classes, or thematically connected concerts, productions, or arts program.

- **Example One:** An artist will lead 6 weekly artmaking days at the Central Library in Warwick, for youth ages 8-12. The making days will include gentle instruction, a wide variety of materials, and space to imagine. The classes are in the afternoons, and free to all participants and their caregivers.

- **Example Two:** Three artists will create an interactive performance featuring dance, music, and spoken word. This piece will be performed in Kennedy Plaza and is about how residents use the transit system. Creation will include observation and interviews of people using the transit hub, and the performance will be created with a non-captive audience of people that will be moving around in mind. For each of 8 weeks, the artists will spend 4 hours in Kennedy Plaza and 4 hours in the studio.
- **Example Three:** Screen printing in the park! People of all ages will be invited to bring blank materials (posters, t-shirts, canvas bags) to screen print under the guidance of an artist. The artist will provide templates that celebrate the history of the city of Woonsocket, and the state of Rhode Island. This will happen on three Saturdays during the summer, in River Island Art Park.

[See grants awarded in the most recent grant cycle.](#)

Project Value to the Community

Core to all funded programs is a connection and value to the community being engaged with by the public, fulfilling RISCA's charge to facilitate a meaningful cultural life for all Rhode Island residents.

Per guidelines from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and our agency values, programs that engage underserved communities as defined by the NEA are particularly suitable for Community Engaged Project Grants.

Eligibility

You must:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Have lived in Rhode Island for at least one year at the time of application. This means 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. You must reside in the state for at least 183 days per year.
- Be a legal resident of the United States with a tax identification 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.

- Submit only one application per grant deadline to the Community Engaged Project Grant program.
- This program occurs in spaces that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. See the [NEA's Accessibility: Publications, Checklists, & Resources](#) for more information.
- The funded portion of the project activity takes place in Rhode Island.

You are ineligible:

- A current recipient of the General Operating Support for Artists grant.
- A staff member or Council member of RISCA, or an immediate family member of a staff or Council member.
- Currently enrolled in an arts degree seeking program or attending high school full time.
- Proposing a project that is part of a nonprofit or other formal entity's work. You can receive in-kind donations from formal entities (like donated rehearsal space or materials).
- Not the primary artistic force behind the project.
- Applying for support for this project or aspects of this project through another RISCA grant program.
- Delinquent on any final reports for previous RISCA grants.

Funding Rules and Restrictions

- All grant awards are contingent upon the availability of funds from the State of Rhode Island General Assembly and the NEA.
- The maximum grant award in this category is \$5,000 – but partial awards are common. Partial awards will be no less than 50% of the application request or \$1,000, whichever is higher.
- Grant applications are considered on a competitive basis. Award amounts may vary cycle to cycle depending on available funds, number of applications, and the panel decision-making. [For more information on our Decision-Making Process, visit our Applicant Resources web page.](#)
- If you receive a partial award, you will not be expected to accomplish the project as initially outlined. You may reach out to the Program Director to discuss project modifications at any time.
- You have the option of declining the grant award with no penalties.
- If you receive a grant, you must credit RISCA on all marketing materials. [See Acknowledging RISCA.](#)

Grant funding cannot be used for the following:

- Capital projects, including the construction or renovation of buildings, or additions to buildings.
- Any fundraising expenses such as creating rewards for a Kickstarter or hosting a fundraising event for any purpose.
- Addressing, eliminating, or reducing existing debt.
- Entertainment and hospitality, including expenses for activities such as receptions, parties, galas, etc. Specific costs that have a core programmatic purpose and are included in your budget may be allowable.
- Prizes and awards for an event, person, and/or organization.
- Regranting.
- Activities that are associated with 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.
- Programming, performances, and exhibitions unavailable and/or inaccessible to the public.
- Expenses incurred or activity happening outside of the award period.

Accommodations and Access Policy

It is the policy of RISCA that no qualified individual, based on a disability, shall be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of services, programs, or activities of the agency or the agency's grantees, or be subjected to discrimination.

For questions on accommodations, contact Seamus Hames, Arts Education Program Director and 504 Accessibility Coordinator, at 401-222-6994 or seamus.hames@arts.ri.gov.

Accommodations and How to Apply

RISCA only accepts applications through the online grant system Foundant. Please note there are two different grant portals. One for individual artists and one for organizations. If you have questions about whether you or an organization already has a profile in the system or if you have questions about logging in, please contact one of the program directors: [Staff Directory | RISCA](#).

To log in or set up an applicant profile: [Online Grant Application Portal for Individuals](#)

Application

Section 1: For RISCA staff to determine if the applicant meets the eligibility requirements to move to panel review. Includes an eligibility checklist and required uploads.

Section 2: For Panel to learn about the project and to review and score it based on the evaluation criteria. There are three parts:

- **Logistics** - simple questions, check boxes and uploads about the who, what, where, and when of the project. Includes project plan and budget uploads.
- **Artistic Vibrancy and Impact** - three short narrative questions to explain how the art is central to the project, how this artist and/or art will provide a positive impact as measured by the indicated metrics, and how this project will provide access to the intended participants/audiences.
- **Program specific** narrative question(s) and testimonial upload to demonstrate how this project aligns with the specific grant program. In addition, describe how this project incorporates active, two-way, and meaningful engagement with participants.

Evaluation Criteria

Panel reviewers will use the following criteria to evaluate and recommend applications for funding.

Logistics

- The application clearly states what will be done by whom, when, and where things will take place, and how this project will happen both logistically and financially.

Artistic Vibrancy and Impact

- Art is central to this project.
- The artist/artists will provide a positive and purposeful experience for the participants.
- The project will be accessible and inclusive and reduces barriers to access for those who want to attend or participate.
- This project provides access or engages underserved communities as identified by the NEA. Refer to the intended participants/audiences the applicant identified under "Logistics."

Community Engagement

- This project consists of active, two-way, meaningful engagement with the identified intended community.
- This project and artist/artists welcome non and new artists to engage in making, experiencing, or learning about art as an active participant.

Note: Per NEA enabling legislation, the federal agency requires that state arts agencies include artistic merit and artistic excellence in their evaluative criteria. However, the NEA allows state arts agencies to define artistic merit and excellence for themselves and in conversation with their communities. For this grant program, artistic merit and artistic excellence is defined as “artistic vibrancy and impact.”

Support Materials

For Panel Review: Required Documents and Support Materials for Project Evaluation

- Project Budget (Required: Use the [RISCA Artist Project Budget Template](#)).
- Project Plan (Required: Use the [RISCA Project Plan Template](#)).
- Bio/CV/Resume of artist(s) involved.
- Artistic Work Samples: Documentation of up to three pieces of art.
 - This may include images, video, audio, and/or writing. Pieces of art include but are not limited to a short film; a graphic novel; a dance; a painting; a piece of jewelry; a song; a sculpture; a performance in a public place; a poem; a class/lesson/workshop you taught or work of your students; or a quilt.
 - You may submit a maximum of 10 images; and 10 minutes of video; and 10 minutes of audio; and up to 20 pages of writing.
 - Note: You must upload support materials to a Google Drive folder, open to everyone with the link or link and password.
- Work Sample List. Required to use the RISCA Work Sample List Template.
- Testimonial: This can be quotes, a short testimonial, or some other statement from a person or people who has experience with this program, organization, or the artist(s). Maximum of one page.

Glossary

Rhode Island residency: Have been domiciled in Rhode Island for at least one year at the time of application. This means 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. You must reside in the state for at least 183 days per year.

Underserved communities. The NEA defines “underserved” communities as “ones in which individuals lack access to arts programs due to geography, economic conditions, ethnic background, or disability.”