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Project Grants for Organizations

Project Grant for Organizations (PGO) support arts and culture projects that are relevant and meaningful to Rhode Island communities. In comparison with our organizational grant programs, PGO funds the broadest range of cultural activities. Having impact on a small number of people is equally as valuable as an event that many people attend.

Award Amount: Up to \$6,000.

Who can apply

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations based in Rhode Island.
- Groups fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Rhode Island.

Timeline

- Grants open for applications on Feb. 1.
- Deadline is April 1 at 11:59 p.m.
- Funding period supports 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 discrete 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. However, the same organization could not apply to support its entire season of programming since that reflects that totality of the organization's programming and falls outside RISCA's definition of a project.

Project Examples:

- **Example One:** A free, day-long summer cultural festival at a public park featuring live performances, including R.I. based performing artists.

- **Example Two:** A free 8-week series of art classes led by a teaching artist at a social service nonprofit for 12 adults with development disabilities.
- **Example Three:** A low-cost weekend dance program for eight young people within a specific cultural community. Taught by artists or culture-bearers from that specific cultural tradition with the intention of preserving and perpetuating these cultural traditions among future generations.

[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 our 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 Project Grants for Organizations.

Eligibility

- This organization has a Unique Entity ID (UEI). If not, please reach out to RISCA's program director.
- This project is not receiving direct funding from another RISCA grant.
- This organization is not requesting support for this project or aspects of this project through another RISCA grants program.
- This organization is not applying for another RISCA grant at the same deadline.
- This organization is not receiving General Operating Support for Organizations funding from RISCA.
- 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.
- This organization is not delinquent on any final reports for previous RISCA grants.

You must be a nonprofit organization.

- Conducting business and be incorporated in the State of Rhode Island as a 501(c)(3) with tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service.
- Registered with the R.I. 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.
- If not 501(c)(3) tax exempt, a Rhode Island-based organization using a Fiscal Sponsor* that fits the above requirements.
- To confirm nonprofit status with the state, visit [R.I. Secretary of State's online database](#).

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

You still can be eligible if your organization is incorporated in a state outside of Rhode Island. For out of state organizations to be eligible, they must:

- Show their principal place of business is in Rhode Island.
- Be registered with the R.I. Secretary of State's office.
- Produce programming predominantly in Rhode Island.
- Be governed by a revolving board of directors, trustees or advisory board drawn predominantly from the Rhode Island community.

***Applying with a Fiscal Sponsor**

- If not 501(c)(3) tax exempt, a Rhode Island-based organization can apply via a Fiscal Sponsor. A Fiscal Sponsor is an organization registered with R.I.'s Secretary of State Office and can accept a grant on your behalf. The Sponsor must be financially, administratively, and programmatically responsible for all conditions of the grant.
- Organizations interested in using a Fiscal Sponsor must contact their program director prior to beginning an application for approval and to request a grant profile that links the organization to the Fiscal Sponsor.
- Nonprofit organizations acting as Fiscal Sponsors can also apply for grants for their own programs or be awardees.

When submitting a grant via a Fiscal Sponsor, a letter of agreement between the applicant and the Fiscal Sponsor must be provided. [Download the fiscal sponsorship letter template](#). Typically, Fiscal Sponsor will charge an administrative fee ranging from 0-10 percent depending on the degree of administrative support and bookkeeping required. This fee can be factored into the budget.

Fiscal Sponsor Requirements

A Fiscal Sponsor:

- Must fit RISCA's definition of a nonprofit organization as stated above.
- Is responsible for signing any grant documents and ensuring that the sponsored organization follows the rules of the grant program and submits their final report.
- Cannot be a project partner in the sponsored organization's application.

Note: If there is an organization that fits RISCA's definition of an eligible nonprofit involved in the project, they can function as the lead applicant.

Funding Rules and Restrictions

- All grant awards are contingent upon the availability of funds from the Rhode Island State General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).
- The maximum grant award in this category is \$6,000 – 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 may modify the project. Please reach out to staff to discuss project modifications at any time.
- You also have the option of declining the grant award with no penalties.
- If you receive a grant, you must credit on all marketing materials. [See Acknowledging RISCA.](#)

Grant funding cannot be used for the following:

- Capital improvement projects, like the construction or renovation of buildings or major permanent equipment purchases.
- Addressing, eliminating, or reducing existing debt or for contributions to an endowment fund.
- Development or fundraising, such as social events or benefits or any fundraising expenses.
- 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 the funds to other artists or organizations through an application or award process.
- 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. This includes programming that occurs in a space that does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- 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 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.

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 Organizations](#)

Application

Section 1: For RISCA staff to determine if the applicant meets the eligibility requirements to move to panel review, applications must include 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 timeline 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. For the Project Grant for Organizations, describe how this project actively engages participants in making, experiencing, or learning about art.

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.
- The applicant indicates relevant metrics to measure their progress.

Artistic Vibrancy and Impact

- Art is central to this project.
- The artist/artists will provide a positive and purposeful experience for the participants.
- 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 actively engages participants in making, experiencing, or learning about art.

Note: Per NEA's 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 Staff review: Required Documentation for Determining Applicant Eligibility

- 501(c)(3) IRS Determination Letter.
- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). The UEI, a 12-character Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) assigned by the federal System for Awards Management (SAM), must be submitted by any entity receiving federal funds. Visit the [SAM.GOV](https://sam.gov) website to learn how to get a UEI for your organization.
- Recent 990 from one of your past three fiscal years. A 990 is the type of annual tax return 501(c)(3) nonprofits file. For nonprofits less than one-year-old who have yet to complete a 990 form, you will need to submit a Word Document indicating that you have not completed a 990 form.
- If you are using a Fiscal Sponsor, you need your Fiscal Sponsor’s 501(c)(3) Determination Letter, UEI, recent 990, and Fiscal Sponsor letter. Use the [Fiscal Sponsor Template](#) for your letter.

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

- [Project Budget](#) (Required: Use the RISCA Organization Budget Template).
- [Project Plan](#) (Required: Use the RISCA template).
- Bio/CV/Resume of artist(s) involved.
- Artistic Work Samples: Up to three work samples, showing how the artist(s) or culture-bearer(s) involved in the project have experience relevant to this project.
 - 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. Describe each work sample in 1-3 sentences of context about why you feel these work samples, show the artist(s) involved in the project have experience relevant to this project.
- 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).

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Glossary

Nonprofit Organization: Is 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.

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

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). The federal government requires all organization have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Organizations applying for grants from us will need a UEI to submit the application. We recommend you request a UEI as soon as possible to ensure you have it by the application deadline. Visit the sam.gov website for the latest information and instructions on how to obtain a UEI.

Note: To obtain a “Unique Entity ID” does not require a full registration. This registration is free – but there are many scammers out there. Make sure you are doing this process through a .gov website and only trust communications that come from sam.gov regarding registration and annual renewals.