Operating Support Program

This program offers annual operating support of up to $10,000 for regional nonprofit arts organizations. The Operating Support grant is now awarded on an annual basis.

Who Can Apply?

- State-registered and federally recognized non-profit, tax-exempt organizations
- Accredited schools
- Tribal governments
- Units of government
- Your organization must be primarily based (permanent address) in Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, or St. Louis County (outside Duluth) or of the four Tribal Nations within our region: Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, or Leech Lake (within Itasca County) for at least six months.
- If you have no outstanding or overdue final reports from past funding.
- In a single ARAC fiscal year (July 1-June 30), an organization can receive grant funding of up to $25,000 total from applications reviewed in all eligible programs.

If your group has not yet received non-profit, tax-exempt status, you may apply by using a non-profit organization, accredited school, tribal government, or other unit of government as a fiscal sponsor. For information on how to use a Fiscal Sponsor, see the Fiscal Sponsor Guidelines page on our website, or contact us directly.

Qualified applicants should apply regardless of their race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, national origin, status as a documented alien, or status as a qualified individual with a disability or protected veteran. Individuals who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, People with Disabilities, and/or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual/Agender, Two-Spirit (LGBTQIA2+) are encouraged to apply.

What Can't I Fund?

- Organizations currently receiving Operating Support from the Minnesota State Arts Board (MSAB) are not eligible to apply to this or any other ARAC program, though they may serve as an eligible group's fiscal sponsor or partner.
- Equipment more than 25% of the total request amount.
- The organization attempts to influence any state or federal legislation.
- The request includes making improvements to the applicant's private property.
- The organization promotes religious socialization including proselytization.
- The request involves out-of-state travel.
- The organization is not open to the general public.
- The project is for capital improvement, construction, or purchase of property.
- The funds are requested for a project that serves as a benefit, fundraiser, or donation.

When Do I Apply?

Deadlines are firm, applicants are encouraged to finish in advance of the deadline, staff is available during normal business hours to assist. Email admin@aracouncil.org or grants@aracouncil.org with questions or to schedule an appointment for longer consultations.

Application Open: October 2, 2023 | Deadline: Sunday, November 19, 2023 at 11:59 p.m.

How Do I Apply?

Applications must be completed using the ARAC Grant Portal. Submissions in any other format, including email, will not be accepted. Instructions for navigating the online system can be found by clicking on the 'Apply Now' button below.

- The online application process will walk you through submitting your application.
- To be eligible, your application must include all materials listed as required in the online application.
- No late applications will be accepted under any circumstances, please apply early.

Our staff is available to help you sort through your ideas, navigate through the application, provide feedback, and serve as a sounding board for all parts of the process.

ADA requires that organizations make access to publicly funded projects

available to people with disabilities. For more information

contact VSA Minnesota at www.vsamn.org and/or https://www.disability.state.mn.us/.

How Does ARAC Choose Who Gets Funded?

Decisions about the grants are made by panels of artist peers, art administrators, art supporters, and culture bearers from throughout the Arrowhead Region. If you fall into any of these categories and would like to become a reviewer, please complete a reviewer application. ([Grant Panel Application](#))
If you are interested but have not been a reviewer before we provide training as well as a stipend.

Criteria

- Artistic Excellence and Leadership
- Management and Fiscal Responsibility
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Community Accessibility

Applicants that demonstrate an ability to meet these criteria will be weighed together as a slate to ensure equitable distribution of geographic and demographic diversity, ability to reach underserved arts audiences, and diversity of arts disciplines.

What Questions are on the Grant Application?

Artistic Excellence and Leadership
In this section, describe your organization's mission, programs, and services.

- What is your organization's mission and artistic vision for the next year? What are your organization's current programs?
- How do your organization's programs support area artists and/or attend to the artistic growth of your constituents?
- How does your organization contribute to community vibrancy through the arts?

Management and Fiscal Responsibility
In this section, describe your organization's administrative, planning, and fiscal capabilities.

- What are the roles and responsibilities of your staff and board?
- Explain your organization's commitment to fiscal stability. Are your bookkeeping, fundraising, and financial strategies appropriate for your organization's size and constituent community?
- Describe your organization's fundraising strategies. List recent grant applications you have attempted. More points will be awarded to organizations that have a realistic and well-executed fundraising strategy.

Assessment and Evaluation
In this section, describe your organization's assessment and evaluation processes.

- In general, how does your organization use assessment, evaluation, and feedback to shape your organization's planning process, goals, strategies, and programming?

- What does your organization do on an ongoing basis to assess and evaluate whether your programs are addressing the needs of your constituents?

Community Accessibility
In this section, describe your organization's accessibility to your community.

- How do your services and programs provide a public benefit to Minnesota?
- Provide evidence or examples of what your organization does to address economic, geographic, physical, or cultural barriers?
- Does your organization's programming appropriately comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act?

Optional:

- Is there anything more you would like to tell ARAC about your organization?

(**Apply Here**)

Contact info: Holly Hackett-Rich grants@aracouncil.org or admin@aracouncil.org