**Cultural STAR Program – General Operating Fund**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Posted 9/9/2020**

**Does this program require a one-to-one match?**

No. However, we expect that there is a financial impact to the operations of the organizations applying for this funding, and that the funding is going to cover expenses that otherwise would be difficult to pay for.

**My organization had received Special Projects and/or Organizational Development grants in three consecutive grant cycles (calendar years), and had been determined to be ineligible to be awarded Cultural STAR funding in 2020. Can I apply for this program?**

Yes, if your organization meets the eligibility criteria, it is eligible for this program. The three consecutive year guideline does not apply to this one-time program.

**Will this award count toward my consecutive years of awards for future grant cycles?**

No, this program will not be counted, and the clock will be “reset” for all organizations in 2021.

**My organization applied for funding in 2020 Round 1. Is my organization eligible to apply for this program?**

Possibly, if your organization meets all the eligibility criteria. The 2020 Round 1 program is canceled and no awards will be made for those proposals. This is the only funding program for 2020. Your organization can apply if eligible, and MUST submit a NEW application to THIS program by the deadline of Friday, October 2 at 4pm.

**What does it mean to have a primary purpose that is arts and culture or a major initiative focused on the arts?**

Staff will review the organizations mission statement to assess if it shows a primary purpose related to arts and culture. Some organizations that serve the community with broader purposes may have an initiative or program focused on the arts. This would be evidenced in having a large-scale annual arts-based event in Saint Paul, staff dedicated to arts and culture, an advisory board that guides arts and culture work, etc.

Staff will also use the Attorney General Charitable Organization as a source to understand the organization’s primary purpose: <https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Charity/Search/Default.asp>

**My organization, that is based in a city outside of Saint Paul, has received Cultural STAR funding for programs held in Saint Paul in past years. Why is this year’s funding only for organizations based in Saint Paul?**

The Cultural STAR program is funded by a half-cent sales tax charged in the city of Saint Paul, and is required by law to be invested back into Saint Paul. Because this one-time program can be used for general operations and other flexible purposes, the funding must be awarded to organizations with a direct tie to Saint Paul based on their operations and primary purposes and work.

**Addendum 9/28/20**

**ELIGIBILITY**

**Q: If my organization is not a 501C3 but my fiscal sponsor is, can I apply?**

A: No. Unfortunately, groups and organizations that do not have their own 501c3 status are not eligible for this particular program of Cultural STAR. Programs offered in 2021 may have different eligibility criteria, so please look for more information in the future.

**Q: There is a requirement for sitting out a round after you get three consecutive grants. What impact will receipt of this grant have on that requirement?**

A: This program does not count toward the three-consecutive-year award limit. The three consecutive year guideline does not apply to this one-time program. The consecutive years in a row will start over in 2021 for all past grantees.

**Q: Our organization has a mission that is broader than a primary arts purpose, and we have an arts initiative. Our total organizational budget exceeds the maximum for eligibility (which is $5 million), but our Arts and Cultural Engagement division is around $200,000 with their own regular programming, special events, and gallery--all based out of our St. Paul office. Would we be eligible?**

A: Yes. If the budget of the arts component or initiative is less than $5 million maximum annual budget, it would be eligible.

**Q: My non-profit is not arts based, however we have a great creative arts program that is vital to our mission. Are we eligible to apply only for the support of this program?**

A: It depends. If arts are considered a specific program, with staff, a separate budget, and other identifiers that demonstrate that it is a significant program of your organization, then it may be considered eligible. We need to review the information provided to determine. Please feel free to call Cultural STAR staff to ask questions about your specific program.

**Q: Would arts-integrated learning count as arts programming?**

A: No. We would not consider arts being integrated into and not a separate program with its own initiative or program as a major program or initiative of an organization.

**BUDGET AND AWARD AMOUNT**

**Q: Are we applying for a specific dollar amount, or will you distribute funds evenly across all awardees?**

A: Funds will be distributed evenly across all eligible applicants. Applicants will not request a specific amount on the application. The minimum grant award amount will be $5,000. We expect to be able to award closer to $10,000 to $15,000, depending on the amount of funding available and number of eligible applicants.

**Q: The application does ask for a breakdown of fund uses. Should we show all expenses and expect the distribution to be per formula?**

A: Yes. The funding will be distributed by formula, split evenly among all eligible applicants. Question 4 on the application asks for a narrative explanation of the uses of funds (as opposed to a budget table or some other format). It depends on the organization how you might respond to this question, and how you would describe your financial needs. In general, we are looking for a brief explanation to show the priorities of how the funding would be used.

An organization might provide a list of priority expenses for the funding. If an organization has specific expenses that would be covered by the grant based on the need and lack of other funding to pay these expenses, feel free to describe these expenses, and provide dollar amounts.

**Q: Oct 2 is also the deadline for MSAB CARES act funding - if CARES act funding comes in to Cultural STAR can we be eligible for both?**

A: At this time, our understanding of CARES funding is that two sources of CARES funding cannot be used for the same expense. For example, two sources of CARES funding cannot pay for your rent. Please plan carefully on how each CARES grant will be used, to be sure to use the funding for different expenses.

City staff will inform you if you are receiving CARES funding, as opposed to Cultural STAR funding, and the requirements will be explained in detail.

**Q: Our new fiscal year begins Oct 1 and we're preparing a "hopeful" budget for the next 12 months. Would you also want to see our heavily impacted COVID budget of the current, ending year?**

A: Yes, it is helpful to see as much budget information as is current and relevant. The ZoomGrants application system allows multiple files to be uploaded for each required document.

**CULTURAL DISTRICT**

**Q: Organizations that are part of Cultural Corridors (E 7th, for example), are NOT part of the Cultural District. Is that correct?**

A: That is correct. The Cultural District is in downtown St. Paul, in the geographic area bordered by Interstate 94 to the north, the Lafayette Bridge to the east, Harriet and Raspberry Islands to the south, and Chestnut Road to the west.

**Q: If we have art and cultural programs in the map but the office is not exactly in the map would we be designated as being located in the Cultural District?**

A: It depends. If your organization has received a Cultural STAR grant award between 2015 and 2019 that was designated as a Cultural District project, then your application to this program will be designated as a Cultural District application. If not, then it will be designated as outside the Cultural District.

**ELIGIBLE USES**

**A: Can we use the funds to make improvements to a performing arts stage?**

Q: No. Capital expenses are not an eligible use of this funding.

**TIMELINE**

**Q: When funds would be distributed?**

A: We expect awards to be announced by the end of October. The next steps will be to enter into a contract with the City of Saint Paul, which will require submitting a W-9 for the organization, and reviewing and signing a contract. After the contract is executed, the grant check will be mailed to the address listed on the W-9.

**Q: What is the grant period?**

A: The grant period is one year, so from approximately November 2020 to November 2021.

**Q: What do I do if I still have questions?**

A: Contact City staff:

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