

Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation | Arts & Culture Grant Program | LOI Scoring Rubric

Grantmaking focus:

Our Arts & Culture Grant Program will consider proposals that strengthen the arts and culture sector to serve all individuals and communities across the East Metro and Greater Minnesota.

The Foundation believes that all peoples, their cultures, and their art contribute to the meaning and understanding of our humanity and should be honored and celebrated.

Priority will be given to arts and culture organizations that seek to amplify narratives that address challenges facing communities experiencing marginalization (e.g., BIPOC communities, people with disabilities, low-income communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, formerly incarcerated communities and more) through the arts. Additional focus will be on organizations that play integral roles in the health, wellness and vitality of their communities.

Section 1: Overview & Proposed Work

Scoring Description: To what extent does the applicant clearly describe their current focus, key initiatives or programs, and the communities they serve? Strong proposals will show how the organization positions itself within broader efforts to advance change and how its work contributes to a sustainable, thriving, and equitable arts and culture ecosystem.

Score	Description
5	The organization exemplifies these criteria and provides strong responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The response provides a cohesive explanation of the organization’s work, who the organization works with, and why the work matters. It clearly situates the organization within broader efforts to advance the arts and culture space, demonstrating strong alignment and purpose.
4	The organization exemplifies some of these criteria and provides good responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The organization describes its programs and communities clearly, though some elements may not be fully developed or connected. The role within the broader change efforts is present but may be more implied than explicitly articulated.

- 3 The organization generally aligns with the criteria and provides adequate responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The response offers a basic description of key initiatives, programs, and general understanding of the organization.
- 2 The organization may align with some of the criteria and provides minimal responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The information provided is fragmented, vague, or overly general, making it difficult to understand the organization’s focus or whom it serves. Little connection is made to advancing broader arts and culture ecosystem.
- 1 The organization does not meet or does not clearly describe how it meets these criteria. The response does not clearly explain the organization’s work, communities, or relevance to the arts and culture ecosystem.

**Comments
or
Questions**

Section 2: Vision & Approach

Scoring Description: To what extent does the applicant articulate a compelling long-term vision for arts and culture that contributes to a sustainable, thriving, and resilient ecosystem? Strong proposals will demonstrate how their work is informed by, formed with, and directly benefits the communities most impacted. The applicant should also explain how guiding principles, practices, and frameworks such as culture bearing, social connection, social determinants of health, etc. shape their approach.

- | Score | Description |
|--------------|--|
| 5 | The organization exemplifies these criteria and provides strong responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The organization articulates a compelling long-term vision and clearly explains how its work contributes to a resilient and thriving arts and culture ecosystem. The response demonstrates authentic connection to communities most impacted and shows how stated values or frameworks actively guide decisions and practices. |

- 4 The organization exemplifies some of these criteria and provides good responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The organization describes a meaningful vision and references community benefit and guiding principles, though some relationships between vision, practice and impact could be more explicit.
- 3 The organization generally aligns with the criteria and provides adequate responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The response expresses aspirations or values but provides limited explanation of how they shape actual work or partnerships. Community connection is mentioned but not clearly integrated into the organization's approach.
- 2 The organization may align with some of the criteria and provides minimal responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The organization shares high-level intentions or language about impact, but it is unclear how this translates into practice or benefits communities most impacted.
- 1 The organization does not meet or does not clearly describe how it meets these criteria. The response does not clearly articulate a long-term vision or how the work contributes to a resilient arts and culture ecosystem. Little to no connection is made to community influence, benefit, or guidance practices.

**Comments
or
Questions**

Section 3: Organizational Readiness & Capacity

Scoring Description: To what extent does the applicant demonstrate organizational readiness and capacity to carry out this work? Strong proposals will describe leadership, staffing, financial health, and infrastructure in ways that convey both current strengths and areas for growth. The applicant should show how funding will support continued growth, strengthen organizational infrastructure, and expand their ability to contribute to a strong and resilient arts ecosystem over the long term.

Score

Description

- 5** The organization exemplifies these criteria and provides strong responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The response clearly describes leadership and a readiness that inspires confidence in the organization's ability to carry out the work. Information shared thoughtfully identifies how funding will strengthen infrastructure, support sustainability, and build capacity to lead change over time.
- 4** The organization exemplifies some of these criteria and provides good responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The organization provides a clear overview of its structure and readiness, though some elements may lack detail or connection to future growth. The use of funding to strengthen capacity is described but may not be fully developed.
- 3** The organization generally aligns with the criteria and provides adequate responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The response offers general information about leadership or operations but does not fully convey how the organization will sustain its work. Connections between funding and long-term capacity building are present but remain broad.
- 2** The organization may align with some of the criteria and provides minimal responses to the corresponding LOI questions. The description of leadership and financial position is minimal or fragmented, making it difficult to understand readiness to implement work.
- 1** The organization does not meet or does not clearly describe how it meets these criteria. The response does not provide enough detail about organizational leadership, capacity or financial context to determine readiness. It's unclear how funding would support the organization's ability to carry out or sustain the work.

**Comments
or
Questions**