

## Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation | Arts & Culture Grant Program | Application 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 of Proposed Work & Your Role in Community

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant demonstrate that their arts and culture work enhances community well-being, addresses inequities, and meets the cultural, physical, mental, and spiritual needs of community members, particularly those historically excluded from access to resources? The applicant show how their work intersects with other areas of community life such as community engagement, community development, civic participation, health (mental and physical), education/youth development, housing justice, land sovereignty, immigrant rights, climate justice/environmental health, economic justice/workforce development, and gender/LGBTQIA justice.

#### Score

#### Description

5

The response clearly and compellingly demonstrates how the organization's arts and culture work enhances community well-being across multiple dimensions (cultural, physical, mental, and/or spiritual). It shows strong alignment with advancing equity and addressing systemic disparities, particularly for historically excluded communities, and meaningfully connects to multiple areas of community life.

- 4** The organization describes its role in community with clarity and shows how its work contributes to well-being and addresses inequities. Connections to other sectors or areas of community life are present, though they may not be as deeply integrated or fully articulated.
- 3** The response describes the organization's role and impact in community but remains somewhat broad or program focused. While there are references to well-being or intersectional impact, the connections to equity or other sectors are limited or not fully developed.
- 2** The description of the organization's role in community is vague or lacks depth, making it difficult to understand its impact on well-being or inequities. Connections to other areas of community life are minimal or unclear.
- 1** The response does not clearly demonstrate how the organization's work contributes to community well-being or addresses inequities. There is little to no evidence of intersectional impact or alignment with broader community needs.

**Comments  
or  
Questions**

## **Section 2: Current and Future Conditions**

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant clearly describe the current conditions in their community, the barriers faced by the people they serve, and the strengths and assets they can draw on? How does the applicant articulate a vision for where they hope to be in five years and the strategies to overcome challenges?

- | <b>Score</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|--------------|---|
| <b>5</b>     | The response clearly describes current community conditions and thoughtfully analyzes the barriers faced by the people served. It highlights meaningful strengths and assets and connects them to a compelling five-year vision, with a clear sense of how challenges will be navigated to achieve that future. |

- 4 The organization demonstrates a solid understanding of community conditions and barriers, along with identified strengths. The five-year vision is clear, though connections between current conditions, assets, and strategies to overcome challenges may not be fully developed.
- 3 The response describes community challenges and assets at a general level but lacks depth or specificity. A future vision is present, though it may be broad or not clearly connected to how challenges will be addressed over time.
- 2 The description of community conditions, barriers, or strengths is vague or incomplete, making it difficult to understand context. The future vision is minimally described or not clearly connected to actionable strategies.
- 1 The response does not clearly describe current conditions, barriers, or strengths, and lacks a defined vision for the future. Reviewers are unable to determine how the organization plans to move forward or address challenges.

**Comments  
or  
Questions**

### **Section 3: Strategies & Activities**

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant demonstrate how their work creates a more sustainable, thriving and resilient community through arts and culture? Strong applications will describe the narratives, structures, relationships, networks, mindsets, and power dynamics they are engaging with, and the outcomes or shifts they are experiencing now and hope to see in the future.

- | <b>Score</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|--------------|---|
| 5            | The response presents a clear and cohesive set of strategies that demonstrate how the organization is advancing a more sustainable, thriving and resilient community through arts and culture. It thoughtfully engages multiple dimensions of change such as narratives, relationships, structures, and power, and clearly articulates both current outcomes and future shifts the work is driving. |

- 4 The organization describes well-defined strategies and activities that contribute to a more sustainable, thriving and resilient community through arts and culture. Elements of systems change are present, though connections across areas (e.g., power, networks, or mindsets) or to long-term outcomes may not be fully developed.
- 3 The response outlines activities or approaches but may feel programmatic or loosely connected rather than part of a cohesive strategy. While there is some alignment with equity and community impact, the connection to broader systems change or specific outcomes is only partially articulated.
- 2 The strategies are described in broad or unclear terms, making it difficult to understand how the work will lead to meaningful or sustained change. There is limited evidence of engagement with systems-level factors such as power, relationships, or narratives.
- 1 The response does not clearly describe strategies or activities that contribute to a more sustainable, thriving and resilient community through arts and culture. There is little to no indication of how the work will create meaningful impact or shift underlying conditions.

**Comments  
or  
Questions**

## **Section 4: Community Voice**

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant show that their work is informed by, formed with, and benefiting the communities most impacted? The applicant should demonstrate how community voices shape their strategies and how they collaborate with organizations, coalitions, or public partners to build collective strength toward shared goals.

- | <b>Score</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|--------------|---|
| 5            | The response clearly demonstrates that the work is informed by, formed with, and directly benefits the communities most impacted. Community voice is meaningfully integrated into decision-making and strategy, not just consulted. The organization shows strong, authentic collaboration with partners, coalitions, or public entities to advance shared goals and collective impact. |

- 4 The organization describes how community voices inform and influence its work and identifies who benefits. Collaboration with partners is evident, though the depth of shared decision-making or collective strategy may not be fully articulated.
- 3 The response identifies the communities served and suggests some level of engagement, but it is unclear how deeply community voice shapes decisions or strategy. Partnerships are mentioned but appear more transactional or loosely connected to shared goals.
- 2 The description of community engagement is vague or surface-level, making it difficult to understand how communities inform or shape the work. Collaboration with others is limited, unclear, or not meaningfully connected to the work.
- 1 The response does not clearly identify the communities most impacted or how they are involved. There is little to no evidence that community voices inform, form, or benefit from the work, and collaboration is absent or unclear.

**Comments  
or  
Questions**

## **Section 5: Financial Health and Organizational Capacity**

**Scoring Description:** To what extent does the applicant demonstrate the organizational capacity and financial health needed to sustain their work over the next five years? The applicant describes how their budget aligns with their goals, identify areas of growth, and outline the resources needed to carry the work forward.

- | <b>Score</b> | <b>Description</b>  |
|--------------|---|
| 5            | The response clearly demonstrates organizational capacity and financial health to carry out the work over the next five years. It thoughtfully connects budget, staffing, and infrastructure to systems change goals, while also naming areas for growth and how resources will support long-term sustainability. |

**4** The organization provides a clear overview of its capacity and financial position, with general alignment between budget and goals. Areas for growth and resource needs are identified, though connections to long-term sustainability or systems change may not be fully developed.

**3** The response includes general information about staffing, budget, or operations but lacks depth or clear alignment to systems change goals. Resource needs or areas for growth are mentioned but remain broad or not fully connected to sustaining the work.

**2** The description of organizational capacity or financial health is minimal or unclear, making it difficult to assess readiness for long-term work. The relationship between budget, goals, and resource needs is loosely addressed or underdeveloped.

**1** The response does not provide enough detail about organizational capacity or financial health to determine readiness. It is unclear how the organization will resource or sustain the work overtime.

**Comments  
or  
Questions**