

FY 22 Final Report to MSAB from the Lake Region Arts Council

Approved at the LRAC Board meeting, Sept. 20, 2022

Use of this report:

This document has been prepared to meet the requirements of the Minnesota State Legislature to qualify the Lake Region Arts Council for receipt of a block allocation to be used in funding local arts development programs and activities. In addition, this FY22 Final Report is to provide a basis for decisions to be made by the Lake Region Arts Council regarding overall activities as a Regional Arts Council and to act as a guide against which progress can be measured as the Council strives to attain its stated goals in this biennium (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2023).

Planning Process

The Planning Process for this Biennium has relied on several assessment tools, including the regional needs assessment survey done in January, 2022, (see attachment), on site interviews with grantees, input from our grantees final reports, workshop/networking evaluations and a LRAC Board self-assessment tool.

The prioritized critical issues gleaned from the FY22 needs assessment survey related to the Biennial work plan of LRAC are:

- LRAC Services: Continue to offer current services, but try to raise awareness of Artist Registry and now that COVID is less of an issue, offer more networking opportunities.
- LRAC Grants: Continue to offer current grants, continue to offer flexibility in making changes to grants date and venues that might be impacted by COVID concerns.
- Equitable Access: Move forward with Artists on Main Street program, increase access to the arts for youth at risk and those with a disability.
- Stewardship: Continue to maintain high standards of stewardship, continually improve our grant process and office support.

The LRAC dedicates its McKnight Foundation funding to the needs of individual artists, for which the critical issues were:

1. Need funding resources for artists
2. Need marketing/advertising expertise and guidance
3. Need space/opportunities to display art or performance space
4. Need opportunities to network with other artists

Prioritized critical issues related to COVID 19 Impact, based on input from in person interviews and surveys.

- COVID recovery needs: Support recovery of artists and arts organizations as the arts try to return to normal. Offer virtual meetings, events, workshops as an option.

Summary of FY22 by Exec. Director, Maxine Adams

The LRAC FY22 budget was fully funded with an increase in Legacy funding from FY21 and General funding remaining stable. The McKnight Foundation fully funded LRAC and was very pleased with our new programming that matches McKnight's shift in priorities to Cultural Equity work, they are supportive of our Artist of Color Cohort pilot program. We were able to have a record breaking amount of funding available for the Spring Legacy Grant round, which resulted in a huge increase in the number of applicants. See details in grant report section.

Based on feedback from our arts organizations, we have increased the budget for our Operating Support grants. LRAC is very proud that we have funding to help the artists and arts organizations who are still being negatively impacted by COVID.

LRAC is ending FY22 in a good financial position with carryover projected for Base, McKnight and Legacy that will help us meet our budget for FY23. We have been able to respond to the unexpected increase in operating expenses from inflation. It was a challenge but we have an FY23 budget that can cover the significant and much appreciated increases in staff salaries and benefits without compromising our ability to fund our grant programs. There was more time and research to the FY23 budget than normal.

LRAC underwent an important staff change in FY22. Our grants manager of 12 years retired and we hired a new person who was able to serve a 6 month training period with the retiring staff person. It has been a surprising smooth transition. The office productivity and working atmosphere is as good as it has ever been. The new team works well together and I can't say enough good things about their dedication and professionalism.

The Executive Director has spent a significant portion of her time making sure LRAC is responsive to issues of Diversity and increasing access to our grants and services and has appreciated the Board's support as we try to plot a course for LRAC that acknowledges the need to be sensitive to cultural equity needs and those tax payers who might not share the same values. We will continue to bring opportunities to the Board for education on access best practices for nonprofits.

LRAC is very pleased with our Artist of Color Cohort pilot project this year. All 3 Native American cohort participants were extremely satisfied by their 10 months experience. We will be giving feedback to the McKnight Foundation on what worked (talking circles with successful Native artists, the \$1,000 participation stipend in particular) and the challenges we encountered (presenter of a workshop on building an online presence had to replace, challenges with one of the participants failing to complete work by the deadlines). The Board is encouraged that this program really changed the lives of the three participants. It was an excellent pilot and well worth doing again.

LRAC is in a great position to move into the future. We are grateful for the wonderful LRAC staff and board and our partnership with the MN State Arts Board. We do great work together!

Report on FY22-23 Biennial Work Plan Priorities

Priority 1 & 2: Provide financial assistance to artists and organizations

Measurable Outcome: Minnesota artists and arts organizations say they have access to the resources, information, markets etc. that they need.

Grants provided to individual artists and organizations

Provide a narrative summary reflecting on the grants that you awarded, include your observations related to number of applications, successful marketing, training you provided, and other interesting activities related to awarding grants this year across all your funding sources.

LRAC Grant Programs	# Req.	# Funded	% Grants Funded	\$ Requested	\$ Funded	% Dollars Funded
Project Grants	24	13	54%	\$60,440	\$33,657	56%
Operating Support Grants	19	19	100%	\$95,300	\$93,300	100%
Legacy Grants, Individual	22	12	55%	\$125,640	\$58,337	46%
Legacy Grants, Organization	43	27	63%	\$516,955	\$259,998	50%
Legacy Local Gov. Grants	0	0	0%	\$0	\$0	0%
Career Development Grants	26	9	35%	\$48,360	\$16,600	34%
Artist Quick Start Grants	4	4	100%	\$3,000	\$3,000	100%
Fellowships	11	1	9%	\$55,000	\$5,000	9%
Arts Mentorship	20	12	60%	\$12,000	\$6,880	57%
Total	169	97	57%	\$916,695	\$478,772	52%

During fiscal year 2022, the Lake Region Arts Council awarded grants as shown above. A detailed listing of all grants awarded has been submitted to the MN State Arts Board in a separate document.

Summary of Grants Awarded

This year 52% of the requests were funded, down from 83% in FY 21. Applications more than doubled this year from 81 applications in FY21 to 169 applications in FY 22. This would indicate an increased need for support due to the impact of COVID on artists and arts organizations to generate their usual income. Based on LRAC's FY21 Needs Assessment Survey, we knew there would be a strong need for financial support in FY22. We responded by increasing our FY21 grants budget of \$319,358 to \$478,772 in FY22, an increase of \$159,414. These figures indicate that we are not able to sufficiently meet the need that exists. This inability to adequately fund the requests we receive has existed since these statistics have been tracked beginning in 1999.

FY22 Measurement of success: In FY 22 of those receiving grants from the LRAC 75% will indicate that their project was artistically successful, reached the target constituency and had community impact.

FY22 Needs Assessment measurement shows that 75 % of those receiving grants indicated that their project was artistically successful, and 75% reached the target constituency and had community impact.

Evaluation method: Grantee Final Reports

Services provided to individual artists and organizations

Provide a narrative summary reflecting on the services your region offered, include your observations related to number of people served, successful marketing, training you provided, and other interesting activities related to serving your region this year across all your funding sources.

Services Snapshot:

Service	Funding Source	Comments
Arts Newsletter	Legacy	Emailed every mo. to over 1,920 households, ranked as important in Needs Assessment Survey
Artist Registry	Legacy	Lists 58 regional artist, ranked as important in Needs Assessment Survey
LRAC Website	Legacy	Has over 1,100 visits/mo. average, up 33% from last year, ranked as very important in Needs Assessment Survey
LRAC Facebook Page	Legacy	Has over 7,000 followers, ranked as very important in Needs Assessment Survey
Networking Meetings	Legacy	LRAC held 2 virtual networking meetings, ranked as important in Needs Assessment Survey
Workshops	Legacy	LRAC held and sponsored over 12 virtual workshops, ranked as very important in Needs Assessment Survey
Regional Media Promotion	Legacy	LRAC produced over 12 videos promoting artists, arts organizations and arts events, feedback is that the videos are very valuable
Equitable Access Program	Legacy	See detailed info below
Galleries, Main and Solo gallery space	Legacy	11 exhibits per year, average attendance is 150 viewers per exhibit, but it varies greatly.
Artist of Color Cohort Program	McKnight Foundation	See detailed info below
Springboard for the Arts office	McKnight Foundation	Connects and helped 375 artists, provided 58 hours of virtual workshops and 6 artist residencies, ranked as very helpful in Needs Assessment Survey

FY22 Measurement of success: In FY22 of those receiving services from the LRAC, 75% will indicate that the services provided by LRAC are important or very important to them and have provided access to a variety of resources they need.

FY22 Needs Assessment survey measurement shows that on average, over 80% of those responding to the FY22 Needs Assessment Survey* indicated that the services provided by LRAC are important or very important to them and have provided access to a variety of resources they need. Exception to this is the Artist Registry. Feedback indicates a lack of knowledge that this service exists. LRAC responded by increasing social media posts asking artists to register and the public to use the Artist Registry. The needs assessment survey in FY23 will be used to see if this increased use of the Registry.

Priority 3: Provide equitable access to grants and services to artists and organizations providing arts activities.

Measurable Outcome: Applicants, grantees and panelists believe that the LRAC grant making process is equitable.

FY 22 was the fifth year for the Artist Cohort Program and our Equitable Access Program. Changes were made to the Artist Cohort Program. In FY22 LRAC received funding from the McKnight Foundation to do an Artist of Color Cohort program. This program will alternate years with the LRAC Legacy funded Artist Cohort program, which was suspended in FY22 and will return in FY23. The Artist of Color Cohort was open to artists of color, focusing on Native artists and had 3 participants.

FY22 Measurement of success: End of year measurement of a satisfaction survey showed that all three participants ranked the program as greatly exceeding expectations and found the experience very valuable. The following components of the Artist of Color Cohort will be used in the FY23 Artist Cohort:

\$1,000 Artist Stipend, to offset time and costs related to participation in the 10 month Cohort

Talking circles led by professional artist who will answer questions and offer support on career development.

- **End of year observations: Equitable Access Program**, LRAC continued to build relationships with the following underserved groups:
 - Pelican Rapids Multicultural Committee, supported their Festival of Nations event
 - Moorhead Pangea Festival, supported multi-cultural event
 - Conexiones, Morris, MN supported their Cultural Day arts activities
 - Invited 2 artists of color to apply for open LRAC Board positions.

LRAC will continue to seek out artists and organizations that represent diverse and underserved communities.

FY22 Measurement of success: In FY22 75% of those responding to the FY 22 Needs Assessment Survey will agree that LRAC awards grants with fairness to all applicants.

FY22 Needs Assessment survey measurement shows that 90% of those responding to the survey indicated that LRAC awards grants with fairness to all applicants.

Priority 4: Act as responsible stewards of public funds.

Measurable Outcome: Applicants and grantees understand the grant-making process, feel that they have been treated fairly, and were provided with good service by LRAC.

FY22 Measurement of success: In FY 22 75% of those surveyed will indicate that LRAC acts as a responsible steward of public funds.

FY22 Needs Assessment measurement shows that 97% of those responding to the survey indicated that LRAC acts as a responsible steward of public funds.

On May 17, 2022 the LRAC Board approved several grant application changes for FY23. These changes were based on comments and survey results collected in FY 22. Please see attached, FY23 Grant application changes.

Priority 5: Act as strong advocates for the arts.

Measurable Outcome: Minnesotans are satisfied with how state resources for the arts are allocated and with the benefits those resources produce.

In FY22 LRAC will communicate a minimum of 5 times per year informing regional legislators of arts activities and issues. LRAC will maintain membership in MCA, AFTA and participate in Arts Advocacy Day.

End of year evaluation: A total of 5 mailings were sent to regional legislators announcing LRAC and MSAB grants that were awarded in their districts. Legislators also receive our monthly eNewsletter and were invited to our Annual meeting. In FY22 LRAC paid dues to MCA and AFTA. LRAC participated in virtual Arts Advocacy week, March 14-18, 2022.

FY22 Measurement of success: In FY 22 75% of those surveyed will indicate that LRAC acts as a responsible steward of public funds.

FY22 Needs Assessment measurement shows that 97% of those responding to the survey indicated that LRAC acts as a responsible steward of public funds.

Attachments:

1. Needs Assessment Survey, 2022
2. FY23 Grant application changes
2. MSAB budget template, FY22 EOY, unaudited