

Guidelines – Regional Arts Sector Investment (RASI)

The RASI program supports the core operational costs of regional Western Australian arts organisations. Funding recipients will be determined through an open and competitive grant round assessed by an independent panel. Successful applicants will be funded for three years from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2027.

RASI funding is part of the WA State Government's Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program (RACIP) managed by the Department of Local Government, Sports and Creative Industries. The overarching objectives of RACIP are to develop the regional arts, culture and creative industries; build regional capacity and economic diversity; and contribute to the liveability and vibrancy of regional WA communities. RASI funding is delivered to the community via Regional Arts WA, in its role as the State's peak body for regional arts development.

RASI funding is open to regionally-based not-for-profit organisations that deliver a program of arts activities to the community. RASI will invest in organisations across the State that collectively:

- Create, present or support relevant, diverse, challenging and exciting arts and cultural experiences for regional Western Australian communities;
- Support the development of the regional arts and cultural sector; and
- Contribute to the cultural and economic diversity in regional communities through the employment of professional regional artists and arts workers, and the support of skills transfer opportunities.

Please read through the guidelines before applying. Additional support for applicants is available via a suite of short videos, which will be made available in January 2024, and two applicant workshops in February 2024. Visit the RASI funding page on the Regional Arts WA Website for further details.

Key dates

APPLICATIONS OPEN via SmartyGrants: **Thursday 18 January 2024**
APPLICATIONS CLOSE: **Thursday 7 March 2024, 5pm**
 Applicants advised of outcomes: **Mid April 2024**
 Contracted funding period: **1 July 2024 - 30 June 2027**

Who can apply?

The Regional Arts Sector Investment program supports arts and cultural organisations that are:

- Not-for-profit organisations
- Based in regional Western Australia (as determined by the [Regional Development Commission boundaries](#))
- Legally incorporated and have an ABN registered to a regional address
- Have formal governance and operational infrastructure, e.g. Constitution and Board
- Have annual financial budgeting processes and reporting systems and if requesting over \$25,000, have annual accounts independently audited (or be prepared to undertake annual audits).

The fund has a priority focus on organisations whose primary purpose is the development of arts and culture with and for WA's regional communities. However, it is recognised some regional communities are serviced by non-arts not-for-profit organisations. These organisations are eligible to apply if they present programs that deliver arts outcomes.

Who cannot apply?

- Local governments, including venues operated by local governments
- Individuals and for-profit organisations
- Unincorporated organisations
- Organisations not based in regional WA (as determined by the [Regional Development Commission boundaries](#))
- Organisations with ABN's not registered to a regional address
- Organisations funded through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' Arts Organisations Investment Program or the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework
- Academic, training institutions and schools
- Organisations whose primary focus is the delivery of competitions, awards or fundraising activities
- Organisations that have outstanding acquittals with Regional Arts WA or the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

How much can you apply for?

Funding is available for up to \$80,000 per annum for 3 years (July 2024 – June 2027), to a maximum total of \$240,000 per organisation. The total pool of funds Regional Arts WA will distribute is approximately \$2 million across three years.

We envisage the program will support organisations of differing scale, with requests ranging from \$10,000 to \$80,000 per annum. In determining the size of the funding request, applicant organisations need to consider the scale and cost of their proposed program, and how they can demonstrate their capacity to deliver at this scale. The Panel will expect organisations asking for higher amounts to meet the assessment criteria to a higher degree.

The Panel will make decisions based on the strength of each application, how well it meets the assessment criteria, and will consider the broad regional investment impact. There is no funding cap per community, however, we encourage applicants to clearly articulate how they see their role in the local and regional arts ecosystem, especially in relation to other arts organisations in the same locality.

Important information:

- Only organisations with a Strategic Plan (or Business Plan) can apply for \$25,000 and above per annum.
- Applicants requesting funds in the higher bracket will need to demonstrate reserve ratios that represent good financial management and governance processes.
- It is expected that organisations asking for above \$45,000 per year will demonstrate reserve ratios of 15% (i.e. net assets are equal to at least 15% of annual total expenditure).
- RASI funds cannot be the sole funding source. All organisations will be expected to demonstrate funding from a range of sources.
- Organisations in receipt of funding through the Department of Local Government and Regional Development must clearly identify this income in their budget and ensure RASI funding is not going towards the same components of budgets (i.e. funding the same staff member or operational costs).

What you can apply for

- This funding is intended to fund operational expenses and employment costs. This can include salaries and fees for personnel, as well as administration costs such as rent, power, governance, software subscriptions, telecommunications and insurance. Capital purchases up to \$3,000 will be considered if they support operations and employment.
- Some program/project costs may be covered if the organisation determines this is the best use of these funds; however, it is important to note that there are other grants available that support project costs.

What you cannot apply for

- Programs that principally benefit metropolitan locations or areas outside of regional WA.
- Capital works such as construction or purchasing of studios, workspaces or gallery spaces.

Assessment Criteria

Your application will be assessed by an independent Panel against the following criteria. The RASI Panel will be made up of peers who are active in arts and culture in the regions and have experience across a range of art-forms. There will also be a representative from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries on the Panel.

Organisational

The extent to which your organisation:

- Has a clear arts development strategy
- Has skilled staff and a board governance structure
- Generates employment for regional arts workers and artists
- Demonstrates sound financial management
- Demonstrates income from a variety of sources.

Artistic

The extent to which your organisation and annual program:

- Offers relevant, diverse, challenging and exciting arts and cultural experiences for the local community
- Encourages participation in arts and culture
- Is well-regarded within the local or state context.

Community

The extent to which your organisation:

- Develops partnerships with local organisations and regional peers
- Engages, collaborates, and consults with the community
- Adds to the vibrancy and liveability of the community
- Advocates to and for the regional arts sector.

Note: The Project Officer will also supply the Panel with information relating to an applicant's funding history with Regional Arts WA and previous reporting and acquittals.

Application Process

We have sought to develop an application process that minimises administrative burden while enabling rigorous assessment against the criteria. The RASI Panel will base decisions on the following:

- RASI application form
- Strategic Plan (and any supplementary information addressing assessment criteria)
- Annual program
- Proposed budget for 2024-25
- Financial statements
- Letters of support.

The online application form will contain a minimal number of questions. It will enable supporting documentation to be uploaded, in addition to capturing:

- General applicant information
- Links between your Strategic Plan and the assessment criteria
- Supplementary information addressing the assessment criteria (where you feel your Strategic Plan does not cover it adequately)
- Short bios of:
 - the Board Chair
 - the organisation's most senior employee (e.g. CEO or Director)
 - three key artists
- Proposed changes to your program after 2024 (if you envisage major changes)
- Output data goals (which will form part of regular reporting for successful applicants)
- Budget summary for Year One of the funding period: i.e. 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Applications open Thursday **18 January 2024** and are to be submitted online through SmartyGrants. You can log in or register with [SmartyGrants](#) via the link on the Regional Arts WA website.

Supporting Documentation

The supporting documentation outlined below must be uploaded in the application form or made accessible from the application form via URLs.

- If you are requesting \$25,000 or above per annum, you must provide your organisation's Strategic Plan (maximum 20 pages). Please note that we do not expect you to rewrite your current plan for this application - you can address the criteria directly in the application form if necessary. (For advice and templates on strategic plans, refer to the [Creative Australia Strategic Plan Framework](#), which is used by arts organisations nationally and State including the DLGSC.)
- If you are requesting under \$25,000 per annum, you have the option of submitting a Strategic Plan or responding directly to the assessment criteria in the application form.
- Your organisational structure (1 page - unless already included in your Strategic Plan).
- Annual program information:
 - Arts and cultural program for the past 12 months (maximum 2 pages)
 - Proposed arts and cultural program for 2024, with enough detail for the RASI Panel to assess against relevant assessment criteria (maximum 2 pages).

- Detailed budget for the financial year 1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025 and a budget summary for the three year funding period ending 2026-27. (A budget summary template can be accessed from the RASI Funding page on RAWA's website.) We ask that you set up your budgeting and financial reporting in 6-month periods so you can collate reporting by calendar or financial year as needed.
- Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss statements from the last two financial years (or calendar year if appropriate), audited if available. This should show grant income as part of revenue, and identify your different sources of income clearly.
- A maximum of 5 letters of support (collated into one PDF).

Non-essential documentation:

- Maximum 10 images illustrating your activities (collated into one PDF).
- Maximum 10 minutes of audio or video material illustrating your activities.
- Up to 3 direct URLs (must be accessible via sites that do not require a log-in).

Assistance for Applicants

Videos

A suite of short videos will be released to complement these guidelines, offering information and advice about different aspects of the application process. These will be available from the RASI funding page in January.

Workshops

In **February 2024**, Regional Arts WA will offer opportunities for applicants to ask questions through a group funding workshop and one-on-one meetings (specified dates only). Make sure you keep an eye on our social media or website for more details about when these are happening.

Reviewing Draft Applications

If your organisation has not received RASI funding previously, you can request a Project Officer to review your draft application. Drafts are due by **5pm, Thursday 22 February**, however, we encourage you to submit your draft as early as you can so you have more time to take on board the feedback and finalise your application.

Public Holiday Notice

Please note that Monday 4 March is a public holiday. The Project Officer will be available for last minute support until 3pm, Thursday 7 March, before the round closes at **5pm, Thursday 7 March 2024**.

Tips for a Competitive Application

- Take the time to carefully read the RASI guidelines to ensure your application clearly answers all questions and addresses the assessment criteria.
- View the short videos designed to assist applicants on the Regional Arts WA website at this link: [Regional Arts Sector Investment - Regional Arts WA](#)
- Attend the RASI funding workshops in February. Book via the Regional Arts WA website.
- Use plain English and make your responses concise. Don't provide answers with unnecessary words that do not address the criteria.
- Don't assume the assessors know anything about your organisation. Ensure all relevant information is provided in your application.

Obligations for Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will be required to complete interim reports and a final acquittal, with funding for years two and three paid on the receipt a satisfactory report. All reporting will be submitted via SmartyGrants.

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Department of **Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries**

Department of **Primary Industries and Regional Development**