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REGIONAL ARTS  
COMMISSION OF ST. LOUIS



## Regional Arts Commission – At a Glance –

Founded in 1985, the Regional Arts Commission (RAC) is the largest annual funder of the arts dedicated to the cultivation, promotion and fostering of cultural programming in the St. Louis region. In addition to financial support, RAC serves as a cultural catalyst in the arts community, providing technical, promotional and other support for arts organizations of all shapes and sizes.



### Governance

A fifteen-member Commission appointed by the St. Louis County Executive and the Mayor of the City of St. Louis serve four-year, staggered terms. A staff of ten, led by the Executive Director.

### Mission

The Regional Arts Commission was founded to promote, encourage and foster the arts and cultural institutions in St. Louis City and County. The mission of the Regional Arts Commission is to create an environment that nurtures artists as well as arts and cultural organizations.

### Resources

RAC is also a resource to the broader community, having developed an arts directory and an online public art catalog, available for free at the organization's Web site, [www.art-stl.com](http://www.art-stl.com). Please follow us on [www.twitter.com/RACStLouis](https://www.twitter.com/RACStLouis).

### Sources of Revenue

Receives funding from 4/15 of the hotel/motel room sales tax revenue from St. Louis City and County, in addition to special project grants from foundations, corporations, the Missouri Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

### Cultural Diversity Initiative

RAC developed a **Diversity Action Plan** to address diversity issues in the arts including policies, guidelines and programs; constituents and their needs; and RAC's role in the broader community. To develop the plan RAC conducted interviews with community leaders and constituents and a study of the changing demographics of the region. A Community Diversity Advisory Council has been established to provide ongoing advice on the action plan, strengthen connections to targeted diverse populations, and keep the Commission informed about developments in the region. RAC is committed to encouraging and supporting diverse cultural expression as well as opportunities for engagement in the arts for all citizens of the region.

### 2009 Grants Allocation

\$3,410,201 in annual grant awards to support 207 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, consortiums and programs in the St. Louis area.

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*Jill A. McGuire*



**Granting Opportunities  
since 1985**

Since its inception, RAC has distributed more than 5,000 grants, investing a total of nearly \$70 million in the St. Louis arts community.

**RAC: A Resource to the Arts  
– Programs, Services & Initiatives of the Regional Arts Commission –**

**Granting Opportunities:  
The Grants Process**

One of the first arts agencies in the nation to develop and implement an online grants system (the eGrant), RAC's Annual Grants Round requests are due mid-January. Each grant request is carefully reviewed and discussed in an open, public forum by citizen panels, staff members and the Commissioners.

**Cultural Resource Center**

RAC conceived of the financing and development of the area's first Cultural Resource Center by creating a Community Improvement District (CID) and issuing \$3 million in tax-exempt bonds to bring the project to fruition. The four-story facility was developed to meet the everyday needs of arts and community groups, both emerging and established.

**The Database of the Arts  
(DART)**

DART is an extraordinary collaborative effort between 15 of the largest cultural institutions in St. Louis. It is designed to increase audiences, ticket sales & museum memberships through highly sophisticated direct marketing. The largest arts marketing collaboration in the country, DART uses shared information from sales to accurately predict which households are most likely to make additional cultural purchases.

DART's goal is to increase Return on Investment so that cultural groups are using their limited marketing budgets effectively. In other cities that have done similar projects, ticket sales increased by as much as 27%.

**ArtSpace  
at Crestwood Court**

ArtSpace is a unique collaboration between RAC and Crestwood Court mall, designed to stimulate both business and the arts. The mall was faced with many vacant stores, and turned to RAC to find artists and cultural groups who could use the space at nominal rents for performances, studios, galleries, classes and offices.

The result is a successful artist's colony, one of the largest of its kind in the United States, which is gaining national attention. The creative solution is driving shoppers to become new audience members for the arts and simultaneously attracting new retailers to the mall to take advantage of the arts audiences.

**ArtsZipper**

RAC has developed the region's most comprehensive cultural calendar ([www.ArtsZipper.com](http://www.ArtsZipper.com)). With more than 800 featured organizations and thousands of events, ArtsZipper.com is the go-to arts site that includes information about events, how to buy tickets, maps to venues, ticket discounts, arts reviews and blogs. Please follow us on [www.Twitter.com/ArtsZipperSTL](http://www.Twitter.com/ArtsZipperSTL).

The exclusive media partner for ArtsZipper.com is the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and its website STLToday.com, which receives several million unique visits a month.

**American International  
Choral Festival**

The Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis ([www.art-stl.org](http://www.art-stl.org)), the St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission ([www.explorestlouis.com](http://www.explorestlouis.com)) and the American Choral Director's Association ([www.acda.org](http://www.acda.org)) are partnering to sponsor the American International Choral Festival produced by Interkultur Federation ([www.interkultur.com](http://www.interkultur.com)) in North America.

Thousands of adults and children representing more than 50 choirs from around the

world will perform in St. Louis from November 17 -21, 2010, at venues throughout the city and county. The public can participate in a host of activities during the festival and choir competition, including the opening and closing ceremonies, free public performances and ticketed concerts. For more information, visit [www.choralfestivalstl.com](http://www.choralfestivalstl.com).

**The Gallery at the Regional Arts Commission**

Located on the first floor of the new Cultural Resource Center, The Gallery is committed to exhibiting the work of local artists and fostering opportunities for curators living in the St. Louis region. By special invitation, guest curators compose group exhibitions, each featuring works that explore a specific discourse. RAC accepts proposals for exhibitions on a rolling basis.

**The Community Arts Training (CAT) Institute**

Since 1997, the Regional Arts Commission has offered CAT as an innovative program centered on the belief that art can be an agent of social change. The CAT Institute is designed to provide professional level, comprehensive training programs for artists and community workers/social service providers working in community settings such as neighborhood organizations, social service agencies, and/or after-school programs. To date, there are about 165 graduates of the CAT Institute working in the community, many on new initiatives developed during their fellowship. Through active learning, and a mentor-based curriculum, the CAT Institute equips fellows to use the arts to positively impact the community.

**The Arts Commandos**

An energetic volunteer program of the Regional Arts Commission, the 250 Arts Commandos carry out specific projects for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in the St. Louis area. Now in their 19th year, the Arts Commandos have worked on more than 935 projects, for a total of nearly 39,000 volunteer hours for the arts community.

**Public Art**

RAC has continually provided a voice and face for public art, contributing to policy development and identifying resources to support various projects in the region. By being a community advocate, RAC has helped to establish an understanding of public art as integral in creating a dynamic environment where we live, work and play. RAC commissioned *Kardia*, an 8½' x 9½' brilliantly-colored glass artwork by William Cochran that can be seen both inside and outside The Gallery. *Support System* by renowned local artist Michael Baurmeister was commissioned for the front door of RAC in 2009. The work, two 120" x 33" x 3" panels in carved and painted wood, is suggestive of a Missouri forest and depicts sturdy trunks holding up a lush, leafy canopy.

**Technical Assistance**

In addition to the annual grants program, RAC has made grant funds available for travel, consultants and equipment purchases. Through the facilitation of workshops and seminars that explore strategies for fundraising to cost-efficient marketing ideas, RAC is committed to providing the arts community with an outlet for continuing education and support.