

Southwest Minnesota Arts Council Grant Conflict of Interest Policies & Procedures as of 5/25/17

Grant Review Panel Meetings: Out of fairness to all grant applicants, it is essential that SMAC maintain strict standards regarding conflict of interest issues. As a non-profit organization receiving funds from both the state legislature and from individual donors, the board and grant review panelists must be at all times cognizant of the public trust with which they are charged.

We have set up procedures to ensure that all grant applicants have the same opportunities to present information about their grant requests. Each applicant has access to staff assistance prior to the application deadline. A complete application is ultimately the responsibility of the applicant. [Effective July 1, 2017: After the grant deadline, staff reviews applications and provides applicants with the opportunity to make sure their applications are as complete and accurate as possible. If staff discovers that applications are missing information needed to meet eligibility requirements after the grant deadline, applicants will be notified and will be allowed 48 hours after notification by staff to file any additional information or revisions to their applications.]

SMAC board, family members & individual artist grant panel members are ineligible to apply for SMAC grants for individual artists. SMAC defines a family member as a spouse, domestic partner, parent, child or spouse of a child, of a Responsible Person.

Any SMAC grant review panelist, including any SMAC board member serving as grant review panelist, who has a conflict of interest regarding an application, either real or perceived, must declare that a conflict exists and is required to leave the room prior to any discussion and voting on that application. Panelists do not score or rank any application for which they have declared a conflict of interest exists.

After the panel has met, there is no further opportunity for applicants to provide input regarding their applications except as noted below. The panel is told that their recommendations are not public information until after the board has acted on them. Applicants who call the office requesting information following the panel meeting are told that we cannot release any information until after the board of directors has met and acted upon the recommendations of the panel. This is intended to prevent lobbying of board members on behalf of a grant application.

The only time an applicant is allowed to submit additional information prior to the board meeting would be if the panel had requested that additional information be submitted to the board for clarification or if the project had changed in a substantial way that would impact the grant application. This usually happens when additional resources are found and the request is reduced or circumstances will prevent the project from being completed as planned.

Because board members and panelists are often involved with organizations that submit grant requests, we must be particularly careful that our procedures are followed equally for all applicants. The only time an applicant would be privy to the panel recommendations prior to board action on the recommendations is when an applicant representative serves on the SMAC board of directors. The minutes and recommendations from the grant review panel meeting are made available to the board members for their review in advance of the board meeting. **Board and panel members may not share the panel recommendations with any person who is not a SMAC Panel or Board member until after the board of directors has met and acted upon the panel's recommendations. Applicants are not allowed to comment on or discuss their applications or comment on the recommendations of the panel with board members prior to board action.**

- ◆ A grant application will be considered ineligible for funding consideration if there is found to be a breach of SMAC conflict of interest policies and procedures in connection with that application.

SMAC Board of Director Meetings: Any SMAC board member who has a conflict of interest regarding an application, either real or perceived, must declare that a conflict exists and refrain from discussion or voting on an application with which they have a conflict. At the discretion of the SMAC president, a board member declaring a conflict of interest may be required to leave the room prior to any discussion and voting on any application with which they have a conflict.

I agree to follow SMAC's Grant Conflict of Interest Policy & Procedure for Grant Panel Meetings as outlined above.

Panelist or Board Member Signature: _____ Date: __/__/__