

A woman with dark hair is painting on a canvas. The background is a soft-focus image of an art studio with warm lighting. A green banner is overlaid on the top left of the image.

## 2026 Scholarship for the Arts



### BACKGROUND

The Iowa Scholarship for the Arts program is administered by the Iowa Arts Council, which exists within the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). Through the program, IEDA provides support to outstanding high school seniors who excel in the arts and are enrolled in accredited educational programs leading to careers in the arts. Scholarships in the amount of \$5,000 are awarded to support 2026-2027 academic year tuition expenses at Iowa colleges or universities.

Operating and granting policies and definitions set out at 261 Iowa Administrative Code Chapter [305](#) and rules pertaining to organization and operation of the Iowa Arts Council found at 261 Iowa Administrative Code Chapter [304](#) apply to the program. Additional eligibility requirements and priorities are set out at 261 Iowa Administrative Code Chapter [308](#).

### QUESTIONS

Potential applicants, especially first-time applicants, are encouraged to review all published material and contact Arts Program Coordinator Brooke Rogers at [brooke.rogers@iowaeda.com](mailto:brooke.rogers@iowaeda.com) with questions well in advance of application deadlines.

### ACCESSIBILITY

The IEDA is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to eligible applicants. For technical support submitting the online application, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator, Elizabeth Ferreira at [elizabeth.ferreira@iowaeda.com](mailto:elizabeth.ferreira@iowaeda.com) or 515.348.6325, at least two weeks in advance of the application deadline.

## **TIMELINE**

### **April 1, 2026 | Fiscal Year 2025 Application Deadline**

The deadline for submitting an online application is 11:59 PM on April 1, 2026.

### **April 23, 2026 | Finalist Applicant Interviews**

The review panel will interview the top scoring applicants on or about April 23, 2026.

### **May 12, 2026 | Award Notification**

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions within thirty (30) days of their interview date.

## **PAYMENT**

Scholarship award recipients are required to confirm enrollment at an Iowa college or university during the summer of 2026. Scholarship payments will be made directly to the Iowa college or university.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

**To be eligible for a scholarship, applicants must meet the following criteria:**

1. Current Iowa resident who will graduate from an Iowa high school during the 2025-2026 school year and has displayed proven artistic ability in the areas of music, dance, visual arts, theatre, folklife or literature; and
2. Accepted as a full-time undergraduate student at a fully accredited Iowa college or university with a major in at least one of the following areas of study: music, dance, visual arts, theatre, folklife, or literature.

**Immediate family members or dependent children of IEDA board members, Iowa Arts Council board members or IEDA staff are not eligible.**

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

### **Eligibility Review**

IEDA staff will review submitted applications for completion, eligibility, and adherence to published guidelines. Applications are reviewed as submitted, provided that the IEDA may contact applicants if any additional information is required. New or additional information or subsequent application information provided for clarification purposes submitted after a program deadline will not be considered unless requested by an IEDA program manager. Staff will also review an applicant's record of compliance and standing with the Iowa Arts Council, IEDA, and State and Federal government, including but not limited to the Iowa Department of Revenue and the Iowa Finance Authority. The IEDA will not move forward to panel review applications or applicants determined by IEDA staff to be ineligible or incomplete. Determinations as to eligibility or completeness are final agency actions as defined in The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act, Iowa Code Chapter 17A.

### **Competitive Panel Review**

Eligible applications will be reviewed by a panel of professionals with expertise related to the purpose of the scholarship program. This is a competitive program. Applications will be scored and ranked based on the published scoring rubric.

### **Interview of Finalist Candidates**

Top scoring applicants will be invited to participate in a 15-minute personal interview with the review panel. The interviews will be held on or about April 23, 2026. Applicants must attend the interview to be eligible for scholarship consideration.

## **DECISION NOTIFICATION**

Recommendations are submitted to the Director of the IEDA for consideration and funding approval. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions, including decisions to decline to fund applications, within thirty (30) days of their interview date. Applicants are encouraged to refrain from contacting staff for application status updates during the funding decision process.

## ONLINE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants must submit applications via the Iowa Arts Council's SlideRoom, an online application portal. Applications will not be accepted in any other format. Late, incomplete, or ineligible applications will not be accepted. Applicants can access the current online application requirements at [iowaartscouncil.slideroom.com](http://iowaartscouncil.slideroom.com). Applicants must create a login to view the full application requirements for the program. Applicants can visit [help.liaisonedu.com](http://help.liaisonedu.com) for assistance related to the online submission.

## Application Question and Scoring Rubric

The Iowa Scholarship for the Arts Scoring Rubric will be used by the review panel to evaluate applications. The following application questions are provided for reference only. Applicants must review and complete application requirements in the SlideRoom portal. Each component of the application has criteria and corresponding point values to ensure a fair review process. The rubric is on a scale of 35 points.

### Essay

**Describe your artistic vision for your work, the role your art form plays in your life, and what role you expect it to play in the future, including:**

- What themes or concepts inspire your work
- Why your art form is significant to you
- What you value about being an artist
- What you hope to gain from a post-secondary education in your art field

<b>ESSAY: VISION - 5 points possible</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Essay demonstrates a clear vision and passion for artistic discipline.	Essay demonstrates a passion or vision for artistic discipline.	Essay does not demonstrate a vision or passion for artistic discipline.

<b>ESSAY: GOALS - 5 points possible</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Essay identifies exemplary goals for post-secondary education in an art field.	Essay identifies goals for post-secondary education in an art field.	Goals for post-secondary education in an art field are unclear.

<b>ESSAY: COMPOSITION - 5 points possible</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Essay is clear, concise, and well-composed.	Essay is clear, containing minimal grammatical errors.	Essay is poorly composed and/or contains multiple grammatical errors.

### **Letter of Recommendation**

Applicants must include a letter of recommendation from a teacher or equivalent professional that specifically addresses the applicant's artistic abilities relating to the intended field of study in college. The teacher or other professional will receive an email including a link to provide their feedback within a secure portal. Please be sure to check with your recommender to ensure they receive the email to submit their recommendation.

**Letters from IEDA staff or from members of the applicant's family do not qualify as letters of recommendation.**

<b>LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION - 5 points possible</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Letter of recommendation is highly relevant to the scholarship and speaks to the applicant's excellent artistic abilities.	Letter of recommendation is relevant to the scholarship and speaks to average artistic abilities.	Letter of recommendation is not relevant to the scholarship or does not speak to the applicant's artistic abilities.

## Work Samples

Submit 3-5 artistic work samples that best represent the quality and type of artwork the applicant creates. Artistic work samples should demonstrate the type of artwork the applicant intends to study in college. Review the Work Sample Guidelines below to find the appropriate types of work samples that should be submitted by discipline.

Reviewers will not be required to view more than 5 pages of a PDF document or more than 3 minutes of a video or audio sample.

<b>WORK SAMPLES: TECHNICAL QUALITY - 5 points possible</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Work samples are of high quality.	Work samples are of average quality.	Work samples are of poor quality.

<b>WORK SAMPLES: ARTISTIC QUALITY - 5 points possible</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Work samples demonstrate exceptional capabilities in artistic concept and form.	Work samples demonstrate average capabilities in artistic concept and form.	Work samples demonstrate poor capabilities in artistic concept and form.

## Overall Application

Panel will score the application overall on how well the applicant makes their case to be awarded a scholarship.

<b>OVERALL APPLICATION QUALITY - 5 points possible</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Applicant's stated goals and artistic vision are clearly supported by their work samples.	Applicant's stated goals and artistic vision are adequately supported by their work samples.	Applicant's stated goals and artistic vision are not supported by their work samples.

## **Work Sample Guidelines**

**Appropriate types of artistic work samples are listed by discipline below.**

### **Literary Arts**

*Examples: Poetry, fiction, non-fiction, playwriting*

Submit documents demonstrating the applicant's literary artwork. Each document submitted counts as one work sample and may not exceed 5 pages. If the applicant is submitting poetry, each poem would count as one work sample. The pages of the documents should be clear and clean. Enter the title, year the work was created, description of concept behind the piece, and any other relevant context for each item submitted.

### **Performing/Media Arts**

*Examples: Music, film, theatre, dance, performance art, music composition*

Submit video or audio files demonstrating the applicant's performance and/or media artwork. Video or audio files should be high quality and clearly identify the applicant's participation in the work. The work sample can be longer than three minutes, but the panel will only watch three minutes of the sample. Applicants can identify which three minutes of the sample they would like the panel to view in the description. Enter the title, year the work was created, description of concept behind the piece, and any other relevant context for each item submitted.

### **Visual Arts**

*Examples: Drawing, painting, mixed media, sculpture, photography, installation*

Submit digital images or video files demonstrating the applicant's visual artwork. Each image or video should be of high quality and clearly depict the artwork. Crop out unnecessary frames and make sure the camera is at the same angle as the artwork to eliminate awkward angles and perspectives in images. Enter the title, year the work was created, description of concept behind the piece, and any other relevant context for each item submitted.

## **Interview Questions and Scoring Rubric**

The Iowa Scholarship for the Arts Scoring Rubric will be used by the review panel to evaluate the interviews. The following questions are provided for reference only. Each component of the interview has criteria and corresponding point values to ensure a fair review process. The rubric is on a scale of 10 points.

**Artistic Ability & Vision**

When and/or how did you become interested in your art form?

Who or what has had the most influence on you artistically?

What do you consider to be your greatest artistic achievement?

What do you find most rewarding about creating art?

<b>INTERVIEW: ABILITY AND VISION - 5 points possible</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Applicant has proven passion for their artistic form and practice.	Applicant is interested in their artistic form and seems committed to their practice.	Applicant has little to no passion for their artistic form and practice.

**Future Goals and Objectives**

Briefly discuss the reasons you decided to pursue an undergraduate degree in the arts.

Name one short term and one long term goal or objective you have relating to your undergraduate education in the arts.

What are your future career plans? How do you see your undergraduate education helping you attain those goals?

<b>INTERVIEW: FUTURE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - 5 points possible</b>		
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Applicant has well-defined future goals and objectives relating to his/her intended field of study.	Applicant has identified future goals and objectives relating to his/her intended field of study.	Applicant's future goals and objectives relating to his/her intended field of study are unclear.