



IOWA ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES



IOWA ARTIST FELLOWSHIP Fiscal Year 2026

BACKGROUND

The Iowa Artist Fellowship program is administered by the Iowa Arts Council, which exists within the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). Through the program, IEDA provides support to individual artists, including visual and performing artists, filmmakers, musicians and creative writers who demonstrate exceptional creativity in the arts and a commitment to contributing to the vitality of the arts in Iowa. The program advances the artistic careers of Iowans through funding and professional development.

Fellowship recipients exemplify the following program priorities:

- **Excellence and Innovation:** Artist demonstrates a unique artistic vision through their artwork and utilizes highly creative means in concept and form to exemplify excellence or innovation in their artistic discipline or field.
- **Career Readiness:** Artist is at a pivotal stage in their artistic career and is committed to advancing their artistic practice.
- **Public Value:** Artist contributes to the vitality of arts in Iowa by actively engaging Iowans through their artistic practice.

The program is funded through an appropriation by the Iowa Legislature to IEDA and a grant by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Applicants must comply with federal requirements, including but not limited to [2 CFR Part 200](#).

Operating and grant 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 in these guidelines published by IEDA.

QUESTIONS

Potential applicants, especially first-time applicants, are encouraged to review all published material, including the administrative rules and published guidelines, and contact Grants and Operations Manager Elizabeth Ferreira at elizabeth.ferreira@iowaeda.com in advance of application deadlines if they have any questions regarding the program.

ACCESSIBILITY

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 515-348-6325 or elizabeth.ferreira@iowaeda.com, at least two weeks in advance of the application deadline.

TIMELINE

Applying to the Iowa Artist Fellowship is a two-step process. All applicants must submit an intent to apply form. Applicants who are determined eligible for consideration will be invited to submit a full application.

December 3, 2024 | Fiscal Year 2026 Intent to Apply Form Deadline

The deadline to submit an online Intent to Apply Form is 11:59 PM on December 3, 2024. Applicants will be notified if they are eligible to submit a full application by December 13, 2024.

January 21, 2025 | Fiscal Year 2026 Application Deadline

The deadline to submit the full online application is 11:59 PM on January 21, 2025, for the funding period July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

March 2025 | Funding Decision Notification

Typically, applicants are notified of funding decisions within eight weeks after the application deadline.

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 | Eligible Funding Period

The fellowship year will run from July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026. All grant project expenses must be incurred and activities must be completed within the eligible funding period.

August 1, 2026 | Final Report Deadline

Fellowship recipients are required to complete a final report by August 1, 2026.

GRANT AMOUNTS AND DISBURSEMENT

Fellows are awarded a \$10,000 grant over the fellowship award period to support the development of their artistic career and to enhance their capacity for creative work. Grantees will receive 75% of the award up front and 25% upon completion of the fellowship year. Recipients will need to complete a final report at the end of the eligible funding period outlining how the grant funds were spent. Any unspent grant funds will need to be returned to the IEDA within 30 days after the final report deadline.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

The Iowa Artist Fellowship combines funding and professional development opportunities to strengthen the overall capacity of Iowa artists. Fellows are expected to fully engage in the professional development opportunities provided over the course of the fellowship period.

The Iowa Artist Fellowship supports professional, active individual Iowa artists who are at a pivotal stage of their artistic career and are committed to advancing their artistic practices in Iowa. Applicants are expected to demonstrate why now is the appropriate time in their artistic career for the one-time award.

The Iowa Artist Fellowship is not an award of recognition for lifetime achievements, nor is it an award for artists just beginning their careers.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

Professional Development

Fellows convene regularly during the fellowship period to receive professional development opportunities to elevate their artistic careers, including:

- Iowa Artist Career Accelerator Program – Fellows are required to participate in the Iowa Artist Career Accelerator Program. The program’s virtual peer learning sessions, mentorship and an in-person retreat will integrate business management, strategic planning, fundraising, communication, marketing and promotion training for artistic careers.
- Panelist Program – Fellows may be asked to serve as panelists on the Iowa Arts Council’s grant review panels over the course of the fellowship year. The grant panelist program provides the opportunity for fellows to develop their grant writing skills and to offer expert citizen advice on arts activity taking place across the state.

Promotion

The Iowa Arts Council seeks to promote Iowa Artist Fellows throughout their Fellowship period. Iowa Artist Fellows will also have opportunities to participate in events to introduce their work to new audiences.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Individual artist, including visual or performing artist, filmmaker, musician or creative writer.
- Current, full-time Iowa resident as defined by Iowa Code 422.4 and Iowa Administrative Code 701.300.17 (422).
- Full-time Iowa resident with permanent address in Iowa and physically located in Iowa since December 3, 2021.
- Full-time Iowa resident physically located in Iowa for the duration of the funding period.
- 25 years of age or older.

Eligible Artists

Eligible applicants to the Iowa Artist Fellowship must be originating, non-interpretive artists working in any artistic discipline(s) including visual arts, performing arts, filmmaking, music or creative writing. Originating artists are defined as artists that create original works of art (e.g. visual artists, playwrights, filmmakers, composers, choreographers, creative writers).

Accessibility - Americans with Disabilities Act

Applicant must demonstrate that the project is in compliance or actively working to be in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. These laws prohibit discrimination against individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities. Both programmatic and structural accessibility must be addressed in the application.

Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants include the following:

- Interpretive artists (e.g. dancers, actors, performers) that perform or interpret other artists' original works of art.
- Past recipients of the Iowa Artist Fellowship.
- Individuals enrolled in any type of undergraduate or graduate degree granting program on December 3, 2024.
- Individuals who have resided out of state for any of the three consecutive years immediately prior to December 1, 2024.
- Artist groups, artist collaboratives and artist collectives.
- Individuals that have received grants, loans or other incentives through the Iowa Arts Council or other program administered by the IEDA that are not in compliance with reporting or other requirements or that are listed on the IEDA's funding moratorium list.

BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Grant Request Expenses

Iowa Artist Fellowship grants support one-time, direct expenses that help an artist to develop their artistic career and enhance their capacity for creative work over the course of the fellowship year. Expenses identified in the grant request should be based on competitive, current market pricing. Applicants can include any expenses related to participating in the virtual workshops and in-person retreat, including time to participate. The grant request expenses must be incurred and expended within the eligible funding period.

Expenses eligible for reimbursement include direct costs such as:

- Access accommodations (e.g., audio description, sign-language interpretation, closed or open captioning, large-print brochures/labeling)
- Artist fees (e.g. creation, preparation, presentation, research)
- Domestic travel (e.g. mileage, accommodation, per diem)
- Marketing (e.g. print material, ad buys, design fees)
- Materials (e.g. paint, costumes, props)
- Professional development (e.g. online or in-person conference or workshop registration fees)
- Professional services (e.g. printer, graphic designer, security, accountant, lawyer, editor)
- Rentals (e.g. stages, studio space, lighting/sound, scissor lift, portable restrooms)
- Supplies the cost of which is less than \$5,000 per unit (e.g. camera, computers/software, kiln)

Ineligible Grant Request Expenses

Expenses that fall outside of the identified eligible expenses may not be included as part of the grant request.

Ineligible grant request expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition/purchase of artwork
- Budget shortfalls
- Capital expenditures, including the purchase of fixed assets or tangible personal property, including information technology systems, having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit cost that is equal to or greater than \$5,000

- Collection maintenance or restoration expenses
- Costs of goods for resale, including concessions or promotional merchandise such as clothing or items purchased for sale
- Costs for the creation of new organizations
- Costs supported by any other federal or state funding
- Deficit or debt reduction
- Donations or contributions to other organizations
- Expenses incurred prior to or after the eligible funding period
- Food and beverage (excluding alcohol) unless it has a clear programmatic purpose.
- Foreign travel
- Funding cash reserve or endowment accounts or instruments
- Fundraising or benefit activity expenses
- General miscellaneous or contingency costs
- Home studio/office costs or expenses, including utilities and mortgage payments
- Lobbying activity
- Prizes and awards
- Property construction, maintenance, restoration or renovation expenses
- Purchase and/or use of gift cards and gift certificates to support project costs
- Purchase of a vehicle
- Social activities such as receptions, parties, galas, community dinners, picnics and potlucks
- Tuition, fees or project activity that results in an applicant's undergraduate or graduate course credit, degree or certification
- Unallowable expenses for federal awards as defined in [2 CFR 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles](#)
- Unrealized ticket or event revenue, i.e., providing free tickets or scholarships to attend an event

REVIEW PROCESS

Eligibility Review

Submitted applications are reviewed by staff 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 application information or subsequent application clarification submitted after a program deadline is not considered unless requested by an IEDA program manager. Staff will also review an applicant's record of compliance and good standing with the Iowa Arts Council, the IEDA, other state agencies, including but not limited to the Iowa Department of Revenue, and federal government agencies or departments. Applications or applicants determined by staff to be ineligible or incomplete will not move forward to panel review. A determination as to eligibility or completeness is the final agency action.

Competitive Panel Review

Applications by eligible applicants that are complete and adhere to program requirements will be referred for a competitive review by a panel of professionals with expertise related to the purpose of the program. Applications will be scored and ranked based on the published scoring rubric. Recommendations for consideration and approval are submitted to the Director of the IEDA.

Decision Notification

Applicants are typically notified of funding decisions, including decisions to decline to fund applications, within eight weeks after the application deadline. Applicants are encouraged to refrain from contacting staff for application status updates during the funding decision process.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Online Application Submission

Applicants must submit intent to apply form and application 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. Applicants must create a login to view the full application requirements for the program. Applicants can visit help.liaisonedu.com for assistance related to the online submission.

Intent to Apply Form Questions

Intent to apply forms must be submitted by 11:59 PM on December 3, 2024. Forms will be reviewed to determine eligibility, and eligible applicants will be invited to submit a full application. Below are the questions included in the form:

- Applicant name and contact information
- Proof of residency
- Applicants to the Iowa Artist Fellowship must demonstrate an active artistic career in Iowa for the past three consecutive years – describe the public facing exhibits, performances, publications, film screenings, readings, etc. that the artist has participated in or created since December 3, 2021.

Application Questions and Scoring Rubric

The following scoring rubric will be used by the review panel to evaluate grant applications. The following application questions are provided for reference only. Applicants must review and complete application requirements in the SlideRoom portal. Each section has criteria and corresponding point values to ensure an unbiased review process. The rubric is on a scale of 40 points.

Applicant Overview

Vision Statement

Describe the artistic vision for the applicant's overall creative practice. This should be the vision for the artist's work overall, not the vision for a specific project or artwork.

Applicant Profile

Describe how the applicant fulfills their artistic vision through their creative practice. Explain the type of artwork that the applicant creates including concepts and mediums used and how it connects to the artistic vision. Include a description of how the artwork or practice is typically presented to the public.

Career Information

Upload a 1-2 page document that details the applicant's activity, such as an artist resume, curriculum vitae (CV), or list of career achievements with dates.

APPLICANT OVERVIEW: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant demonstrates an active practice with exceptional capabilities in concept and form, and deliberate efforts to make work accessible to the public. A strong record of career progress is demonstrated through relevant, notable achievements.	Applicant describes practice, concept, form of work and career progress with some public access identified and some relevant notable achievements.	Career activity, concept and form of work are unclear or inadequate. Public does not have regular access to work. Applicant does not identify career progress through relevant notable achievements.

Work Statement

Describe the artistic vision for the work samples submitted, including:

- type of artwork(s) created including concepts and medium(s) used
- how the artwork is excellent or innovative in terms of methods or trends in your field

WORK STATEMENT: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Work statement is of high quality and exemplifies artistic excellence. Artwork achieves a unique artistic vision through highly creative means in concept and form.	Work statement is of average quality. Artwork relates to an artistic vision through concept and form.	Work statement needs additional development. Unclear how artwork achieves an artistic vision through concept and form.

Career Readiness

Describe why it is the appropriate time in your career to receive the Iowa Artist Fellowship including:

- Why this is a pivotal stage in your artistic practice.
- How professional development, networking, and funding will act as a catalyst for your artistic career over the fellowship year.

CAREER READINESS: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant is at a pivotal stage in artistic career and demonstrates how integrated program benefits will act as a catalyst for artistic career. Demonstrated dedication to advancing artistic career over the fellowship period.	Applicant demonstrates understanding of integrated program benefits. Stated interest in advancing artistic career over the fellowship period.	Applicant is not at a pivotal stage in artistic career and does not demonstrate understanding of integrated program benefits or dedication to advancing artistic career over the fellowship period.

Public Value

Describe how you will contribute to the vitality of the arts in Iowa over the award year, including:

- Target Iowa communities or audiences you seek to reach.
- Intended impact of artistic practice including any plans for creation or presentation of work.
- How you will engage the target audience(s).

PUBLIC VALUE: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant has clear, exemplary plans to impact the vitality of the arts in Iowa by engaging relevant, specified audiences over the fellowship period through their artistic practice.	Applicant satisfactorily demonstrates plans to impact the vitality of the arts in Iowa through their artistic practice over the fellowship period.	Applicant does not sufficiently demonstrate plans to impact the vitality of arts in Iowa through their artistic practice over the fellowship period.

Career Goals and Evaluation

State at least one distinct and measurable goal the applicant intends to achieve with the grant funding. A second goal is optional. Effective goals are specific, measurable and can be reasonably achieved by the proposed activities. The goal should be focused on how the grant funds will expand the applicant’s artistic career and enhance their capacity for creative work over the course of the fellowship year. Describe how you will monitor and evaluate progress toward the goal. If applicable, include plans to share learnings and outcomes.

In addition, select one Iowa Arts Council strategic goal that best aligns with applicant’s stated outcome(s).

- Foster arts programming that seeks to advance individual and community health and well-being.
- Intentionally engage artists in community development initiatives.
- More Iowa K-12 students have access to meaningful arts learning opportunities and career and learning pathways in the arts.
- Nurture and support cross-sector partnerships that include the arts and artists as a core partner to address community needs.
- Promote access to the arts by addressing barriers to promote accessibility and engage new arts participants.

CAREER GOALS AND EVALUATION: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant has clearly identified a goal that is specific, measurable and can be achieved by the proposed activities. Identified goal will greatly expand their artistic career and/or dramatically	Applicant has identified a goal that may be measurable and could be achieved by the proposed activities, but it may not have a great impact on their artistic career and/or	Goal is unclear and/or the identified goal is not likely to impact the applicant’s artistic career or increase their capacity for creative work.

increase their capacity for creative work	increase their capacity for creative work.	
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Project Budget

Grant Request Expenses

Itemize the expenses the grant request will cover during the fellowship year including a brief description of the expense and the numeric dollar amount associated with the expense in the table below. Round to the nearest dollar. The sum of the expenses should equal \$10,000.

Expense Item	Brief Description	Item Cost (\$)
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Budget Narrative

Provide information to clarify any line item included in the project budget or provide further details on the scope of the project budget. If you intend to purchase any equipment, provide justification for this expenditure and how it will help to achieve your career goal.

BUDGET: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Budget and intended use of requested funds are clear, appropriate and will help the applicant to achieve identified goal.	Budget and the intended use of requested funds are identified. It is unclear if they will help the applicant to achieve the identified outcome.	Budget and the intended use of requested funds are unclear or inadequate.

Artistic Work Samples

Provide 5-10 artistic work samples. Artistic work samples must represent a cohesive progression of work. Artistic work samples must represent original works of art. Artistic work samples do not include bios, testimonials, news articles or marketing material such as brochures, fliers or posters.

- Provide 5-10 items.
- Video and audio files should not exceed three minutes each.
- PDF files should not exceed one page each.
- Panelists will not be required to view more than one page of a document or more than three minutes of an audio or video file.

ARTISTIC WORK SAMPLES: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Artistic work samples are of professional quality and represent an artistically excellent and innovative, cohesive progression of work that clearly advances artistic vision.	Artistic work samples are of average quality and/or represent a progression of work relating to an artistic vision.	Artistic work samples are of poor quality and/or do not represent a cohesive progression of work that advances artistic vision.

Overall Application

The following scoring criteria reference the quality of the proposal and application as a whole and not a particular question.

CASE FOR SUPPORT: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Case for support is exemplary and merits investment from the state.	Case for support is average.	Case for support is below average or does not merit state investment.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Applicants should refer to the [glossary](#) for clarification of program terms and definitions.