

IOWA SCREENWRITERS GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES



BACKGROUND

Through the Iowa Screenwriters Grant, the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) provides support to Iowa's screenwriters to undertake activities that advance their artistic practices and elevate the creative screenwriting industry in Iowa. It is a career advancement grant for Iowa screenwriters and focuses on providing professional development tied to an active screenplay on which the applicant is currently working.

The grant is administered by the Iowa Arts Council, which exists within IEDA. Funding is made possible by a sponsorship from the Iowa Scriptwriters Alliance and the Iowa Motion Picture Association. Applicants must adhere to the IEDA's and Iowa Arts Council's operating and granting policies and procedures set forth at [261 Iowa Administrative Code 305](#).

QUESTIONS

Potential applicants, especially first-time applicants, are encouraged to review all published materials, including these guidelines, and contact Arts, Film, and Media Coordinator EJ Philby Burton at ej.philbyburton@iowaeda.com well in advance of application deadlines with any questions regarding the program.

ACCESSIBILITY

IEDA is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to eligible applicants. For technical support submitting the online application, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator, Jennie Knoebel, at jennie.knoebel@iowaeda.com or 515.348.6324 at least two weeks in advance of the application deadline.

TIMELINE

May 3, 2024 | Fiscal Year 2025 Application Deadline

The deadline to submit an online application is 11:59 p.m. on May 3, 2024, for the funding period July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.

Funding Notification

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

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 | Eligible Funding Period

The eligible funding period is July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. All expenses must be incurred and project activities must be completed within the eligible funding period.

August 1, 2025 | Final Report Deadline

Grant recipients are required to complete a final report by August 1, 2025.

FUNDING

Grant Request

Applicants may request funding for eligible one-time project expenses that are incurred and expended within the eligible funding period.

- Minimum grant request: \$500

- Maximum grant request: \$2,500

Funding Disbursement and Reporting

Grant funds will be disbursed directly to the grant recipient in one lump sum at the start of the eligible funding period. Each grant recipient will be required to submit a final report in a form provided by IEDA in which the recipient demonstrates that all grant funds and cash match were incurred and expended during the eligible funding period by providing documentation of expenditures and proofs of purchase and disclosing any other expenses and in-kind donations to the project. IEDA may request additional documentation. The grant recipient is responsible for securing any additional funds needed to cash flow the project appropriately.

IEDA may require the grant recipient to repay grant funds if the recipient fails to demonstrate to the satisfaction of IEDA that the grant recipient has completed the project and expended grant funds to pay eligible expenses during the eligible funding period.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must meet all the following requirements. Individuals who do not meet all the requirements are not eligible for funding.

- Individual [screenwriter](#)
- Current, full-time Iowa resident as defined by [Iowa Code section 422.4](#) with a permanent place of abode, as defined at [701 Iowa Administrative Code 38.17](#), in Iowa
 - 18 years of age or older
 - An application must support a project that is initiated, produced and/or managed by the individual screenwriter, not another entity or organization
 - Maintain current registration in the [Produce Iowa Production Directory](#)

Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants include the following:

- Individuals enrolled in any type of undergraduate degree granting program at the time of application
- Artist groups, collaboratives and collectives
- For-profit business
- Individuals that have an active Greenlight Grant contract
- IEDA grantees that are not in compliance with reporting or other requirements, or who have been placed on IEDA's funding moratorium list

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Projects

An eligible project consists of professional development activities related to the screenwriter's active screenplay. Grant funds must be used for expenses related to the screenwriter's project that advance the screenwriter's professional capacity or career, enhance their artistic practice or allow them to learn new or more advanced techniques in screenwriting. Applicants must be actively working on a screenplay at the time of application and throughout the funding period. Applicants must show progress on their screenplay but are not required to complete it by the end of the eligible funding period.

Types of eligible activities include:

- Participating in professional development opportunities for screenwriting (e.g. online or in-person conference or workshop registration fees).
- Expanding capacity for creative screenwriting work (e.g. purchasing or subscribing to screenwriting software, books).
- Learning new or advanced techniques in screenwriting (e.g. online or in-person classes, courses, apprenticeships).
- Receiving professional screenwriting mentorship (e.g. one-on-one or group coaching, professional feedback, peer reviews on current screenplay).

The following types of screenplays are eligible:

- Feature, including sequels
- Short
- Web series
- Episodic, including pilot episodes or new seasons
- Proof-of-concept
- Adaptations from other works

Ineligible Projects

Projects that fall outside of the identified types of eligible projects will not receive funding through this grant program. Grant funds may not be used to support routine, ongoing activities or expenses. Applicants must demonstrate how the funding will enable them to achieve a particular skill or advancement in their screenwriting career as it relates to the screenplay on which they are actively working.

Ineligible projects include, but are not limited to, the following types of activities and projects:

- Advertisements
- Award shows, sweepstakes or contests
- Capital projects
- Commercials
- Domestic travel-dominant projects that primarily benefit applicant
- Projects that involve domestic travel outside of Iowa must clearly demonstrate how the activities benefit Iowans and the arts community in Iowa
- Equipment-dominant projects that primarily benefit applicant
 - Projects that involve equipment purchases must clearly demonstrate how the activities benefit Iowans and the arts community in Iowa
- Fundraiser or benefit costs
- Infomercials
- Lobbying activities
- Ongoing projects or programming
- Trailers or sizzle reels
- Screenplays primarily consisting of news, talk shows, religious, political, instructional, corporate or obscene content
- Projects-for-hire
- Project activities may occur before or after the eligible funding period, however, grant funds may be used only for costs incurred and activities during the eligible funding period

- Only support for expenses and activities that occur during the eligible funding period may be considered required match
- Project that is initiated, managed by, or that benefits an entity or organization with which the individual applicant has a formal affiliation such as employment or volunteer service
- Projects that result in course credit or degree for the applicant
- Religious activities
- Phases of a project if the applicant has received a grant from the Iowa Arts Council or IEDA for a prior phase of the project
- Sequels or new seasons of episodic productions are considered eligible, distinct projects.

BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Grant Request Expenses

Iowa Screenwriters Grants support expenses that are essential to the completion of an eligible project. The grant request must be dedicated to eligible one-time, direct expenses that are legitimate parts of the proposed project. Costs must be incurred and expended within the eligible funding period. Expenses identified in the grant request should be based on competitive, current market pricing.

Eligible grant request expenses include direct project costs, such as:

- Professional development (e.g. course fees, instructor fees, excluding programs where academic credit is earned)
- Screenwriting software (for the duration of the funding period and necessary for professional development)
- Screenwriting resources (e.g. books, textbooks, peer reviews)
- Domestic travel (e.g. mileage, per diem, and accommodation following the State of Iowa [in-state](#) or [out-of-state](#) employee travel rates, as necessary for participation in professional development)

Ineligible Grant Request Expenses

Expenses that fall outside of the identified eligible expenses for the project may not be included as part of the grant request. Applicants that include ineligible expenses in the grant request may be considered ineligible.

Costs and expenses that are not eligible for funding, nor can they be used as match expenses, include:

- Alcohol
- Budget shortfalls
- Capital expenditures
- Collection maintenance or restoration expenses
- Commercial (for-profit) enterprises or activities, including concessions, food, t-shirts, artwork or other items for resale (this includes online or virtual sales/shops)
- Costs for the creation of new organizations
- Deficit or debt reduction
- Donations or contributions to other organizations
- Equipment purchases
- Expenses incurred prior to or after the eligible funding period
- 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
- Membership/dues that are not specifically dedicated to the professional development
- Ongoing or operating expenses including utilities, rent/lease, office supplies, personnel time that is not specifically dedicated to the project
- Personnel benefits
- Prizes and awards
- Property 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 undergraduate or graduate course credit or degree for the applicant

Match Requirement

Applicants are required to demonstrate investment in a project by providing cash matching funds in an amount that is one half (50%) the total grant amount requested from IEDA. For example, an applicant that requests \$1,000 in grant funds must have at least \$500 in cash match for a minimum project budget of \$1,500.

The required cash match must be dedicated to one-time project expenses that are legitimate parts of the proposed project. Expenses identified in the match should be based on competitive, current market pricing. Applicants will be required to identify all anticipated cash match expenses beyond the grant request in the budget form, as well as the anticipated revenue sources that will cover them. It is not necessary to have the cash match secured at the time of application. The cash match must be secured and identified in the final report to be submitted by August 1.

- Cash match is actual cash contributed to direct project expenses by the applicant or other funding sources.
- Expenses used for cash match must adhere to the same grant request expense eligibility requirements as detailed in the budget requirements section of these guidelines.
- State government funding cannot be used to meet the cash match requirement.
- Funding through the federal government or local or county government may be used to meet the cash match requirement.

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 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, 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 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 grant program. Applications will be scored and ranked based on the published scoring rubric. Recommendations for consideration and approval are submitted to the IEDA Director.

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

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. Applicants must create a login to view the full application requirements for the program. Applicants can visit help.liasonedu.com for assistance related to the online submission.

APPLICATION

Application Questions and Scoring Rubric

The Screenwriters Grant scoring rubric will be used to evaluate applications. Each section has criteria and corresponding point values to ensure an unbiased review process. The rubric is on a scale of 24 points. The following application questions are provided for reference only. Applicants must review and complete application requirements in the SlideRoom portal.

Applicant Profile

Describe applicant's career as an Iowa screenwriter, including:

- The type and quality of productions and/or screenplays.
- Notable achievements in screenwriting career or practice.
- How the proposed production will advance applicant's career and work as an Iowa screenwriter.

Career Information

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

Applicant Profile: 3 points possible		
3	2	1
Applicant demonstrates and supports an active screenwriting career with strong capabilities in concept and form. Applicant demonstrates a strong record of progress in their screenwriting career through relevant notable achievements.	Applicant describes a screenwriting career, concept and form of work. Relevant notable achievements are identified.	Career activity, concept and form of work is unclear or inadequate. Relevant notable achievements are unclear or not identified.

Applicant Goal

Detail the goal(s) the grant funds will help applicant achieve, including:

- How reaching the goal(s) will advance applicant's professional capacity, enhance their artistic practice or expand the audience or market for their work.
- Why now is a pivotal time in applicant's career.

Applicant Goal: 3 points possible		
3	2	1
The identified goal will clearly advance applicant's artistic practice and is the logical next step for their career.	The identified goal might advance applicant's artistic practice and might be the logical next step in their career.	A goal was not identified or it is unclear how the goal will advance applicant's artistic practice at this time.

Project Description

Describe applicant's current screenplay project and the related professional development or other activities that will enable applicant to achieve their career goal, including:

- The active screenplay project that would be aided by this grant.
- The professional development activity that will help applicant's screenwriting career and/or software needed for the furtherment of the screenplay and/or the professional development activity.
- How the professional development activity will advance the screenplay.

Project Description: 3 points possible		
3	2	1
Project description is clear. Project activity is highly relevant to achieving the identified career goal.	Project description is average. It is questionable if the project activity will help achieve the identified career goal.	Project description is inadequate. Project activity is not relevant to achieving the identified career goal.

Project Timeline

Provide a timeline of when project activities will occur. Be sure to include when key artistic decisions will be made, project phases and events, as applicable. If you include activities that occur outside of the funding period for context, indicate that by adding an asterisk (*). Project activity dates may be estimated by month, i.e. February 2025, if a specific date is not yet determined.

Project Timeline: 3 points possible		
3	2	1
Confident project will successfully happen through a clear, detailed timeline of tasks.	Project might be achievable through the identified timeline of tasks.	Multiple concerns about project achievability. Timeline of tasks is insufficient.

Project Budget

Budget Form

Detail grant award and cash match expenses, including a brief description and the numeric dollar amount associated with each expense in the budget form. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not enter decimal signs or commas. Please list the sum total for each expense (row in the table) in the column labeled "Total (\$)".

Expense Description	Grant Award (\$)	Cash Match (\$)	=Total (\$)
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Total Grant Request

Enter total numeric dollar amount of grant request for eligible project expenses that will be incurred within the eligible funding period. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not include dollar signs, commas or decimals.

Total Cash Match

Enter total numeric dollar amount of cash match for eligible project expenses that will be incurred within the eligible funding period. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not include dollar signs, commas or decimals.

Source(s) of Cash Match

Detail the source(s) of the cash match for the grant activity, including the amount from each funding source and whether the funding has been secured. Please be specific for each funding source (i.e. specific name of the grant received or entity that is providing funding). Please note, the cash match requirement may be raised through a combination of public and private sources but may not include in-kind donations of goods or services or other funding from the State of Iowa. The sum of the amounts listed should equal the number reported in total cash match above. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not enter decimal signs or commas.

Funding Source	Amount (\$)	Secured (Yes/No)
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Estimated Total Project Cost

This is the sum of the total grant request and total cash match expenses. Enter total numeric dollar amount. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not include dollar signs, commas or decimals.

Budget Narrative

Describe the expenses that the grant funds and cash match will support within the eligible funding period, including:

- Why the good, service or opportunity was selected.
- Credentials of any collaborators or service providers involved.
- If participating in a professional development opportunity that is competitive:
 - Indicate whether applicant has been accepted into the program.
 - Provide details of a second-choice professional development opportunity that is non-competitive, to be used in the instance that applicant is not accepted into the competitive program.

Budget: 3 points possible		
3	2	1
Intended use of funds is clear and appropriate, and the proposed project would provide applicant with a high quality opportunity to advance their artistic practice.	Intended use of funds is identified and the proposed project might provide applicant with a quality opportunity to advance their artistic practice.	Intended use of funds is inadequate and whether the proposed project will provide applicant with a quality opportunity to advance their artistic practice is unclear.

Artistic Work Samples

Submit 3-5 artistic work samples that directly relate to the proposed project. Artistic work samples should demonstrate the quality of the artistic work in the proposed project or the quality of applicant's past work as it relates to the proposed project. Artistic work samples must represent an artistic work. Artistic work samples do not include bios, testimonials, news articles or marketing material such as brochures, fliers or posters.

- Provide 3-5 items.
- Video and audio files should not exceed three minutes each.
- PDF files should not exceed five pages each.
- Panelists will not be required to view more than five pages of a document or more than three minutes of an audio or video file.

Artistic Work Samples: 3 points possible		
3	2	1
Artistic work samples are of high quality, relevant to the proposed project and clearly demonstrate exceptional capabilities in artistic concept and form.	Artistic work samples are of average quality and demonstrate capabilities in concept and form.	Artistic work samples are of poor quality or demonstrate inadequate capabilities in concept and form.

Overall Application

The following scoring criteria takes into consideration the quality of the proposal and application as a whole and not a specific facet of the proposal and application.

Overall Artistic Vitality: 3 points possible		
3	2	1
Project will advance applicant's screenwriting skills and substantially impact the vitality of the arts in Iowa.	Project might advance applicant's screenwriting skills and notably impact the vitality of the arts in Iowa.	Project does not advance applicant's screenwriting skills or adequately impact the vitality of the arts in Iowa.

Case for Support: 3 points possible		
3	2	1
Proposal clearly meets the goals for the grant program, case for support is exemplary and the project merits investment from the state.	Proposal meets the goals for the grant program and case for support is average.	Proposal does not meet the goals for the grant program, case for support is below average or does not merit state investment.

GLOSSARY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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