

TRADITIONAL ARTS APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES



IOWA TRADITIONAL ARTS APPRENTICESHIP GRANT

Fiscal Year 2026

BACKGROUND

The Iowa Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Grant is administered by the Iowa Arts Council, which exists within the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). Through the program, IEDA provides support to teams of mentor artists and apprentices who are committed to sustaining artistic traditions and cultural heritage. The program helps to ensure the continuation of cultural practices throughout Iowa.

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 materials, including these guidelines, and contact Senior Grants and Programs Manager Jennie Knoebel at jennie.knoebel@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 Elizabeth Ferreira at elizabeth.ferreira@iowaeda.com at least two weeks in advance of the application deadline.

TIMELINE

April 22, 2025 | Fiscal Year 2026 Application Deadline

The deadline to submit an online application is 11:59 p.m. on April 22, 2025, for the funding period July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026.

Funding Notification

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

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

The eligible funding period is July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026. All expenses must be incurred and apprenticeship activities must be completed within the eligible funding period.

August 1, 2026 | Final Report Deadline

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

GRANT AMOUNTS AND DISBURSEMENT

The mentor artist will receive a \$3,000 grant and the apprentice will receive a \$1,000 grant to support their work together over the course of the year. An additional \$1,000 can be requested to cover travel, supply/material costs, and expenses related to the public event. Grantees will receive 50% of the award up front and 50% upon completion of the apprenticeship 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 IEDA within 30 days after the final report deadline.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants

Eligible mentorship teams must consist of the following requirements.

- Individual mentor artist, who is formally or informally recognized for excellence in their artistic traditions and communities
- Individual apprentice artist, who has some previous training in the folk and traditional artform

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

- U.S. citizen or possessing a Permanent Resident Card (i.e. “Green Card”) or in the process of obtaining a Permanent Resident Card, who is a full-time Iowa resident domiciled in Iowa or maintaining a permanent place of abode in Iowa. For purposes of these Guidelines, the terms “domiciled” and “permanent place of abode” are defined in [701 Iowa Administrative Code 38.17](#)
- 18 years of age or older

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

- IEDA grantees that are not in compliance with reporting or other requirements, or who have been placed on IEDA's funding moratorium list

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Mentor artists and apprentices work together over the course of the program year (July 2025 – June 2026) to teach and learn skills related to a folk and traditional artform to preserve and cultivate it for future generations. Folk and Traditional Arts may include music, dance, visual arts, language practices, traditional skills, foodways, occupational arts, and storytelling. Traditionally these artforms are not self-taught or learned in a formal educational setting. They are learned through mentorship, observation, and practice.

Applicants commit to spending at least 100 hours of one-on-one time together during the program year. There will need to be a public event at the end of the apprenticeship year providing the apprentice an opportunity to demonstrate their work.

BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Grant Expenses

Iowa Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Grants support expenses that are essential to the apprenticeship. The grant 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 should be based on competitive, current market pricing.

Eligible grant expenses include direct project costs, such as:

- Artist fees (the mentor artist and apprentice artist's time working on the apprenticeship)
- Domestic travel (e.g. mileage, per diem, and accommodation following the State of Iowa [in-state](#) employee travel rates, as necessary for participation in the apprenticeship)
- Expenses related to the Public Event (e.g. access accommodations, marketing, rentals)
- Materials and supplies for Apprenticeship (e.g. paint, costumes, food items)

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Priority is given to traditional art forms with few practitioners left in the local community and applicants that represent the spectrum of cultural communities across the state.

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.liaisonedu.com for assistance related to the online submission.

APPLICATION

Application Questions and Scoring Rubric

The Iowa Traditional Arts Apprenticeship 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 45 points. The following application questions are provided for reference only. Applicants must review and complete application requirements in the SlideRoom portal.

Mentor Artist Profile

Describe the traditional artform that will be taught.

Provide the mentor artist's background and experiences in that traditional artform, including:

- How long the mentor artist has been practicing the traditional artform
- How, when, where the mentor artist learned the traditional artform
- Who influenced the mentor artist in the traditional artform

- The role and importance of the traditional artform in their cultural community.

Mentor Profile: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Mentor artist demonstrates excellence and extensive knowledge in the traditional artform.	Mentor artist demonstrates knowledge in the traditional artform.	Mentor artist demonstrates limited knowledge in the traditional artform.

Mentor Artist Teaching Experience

Describe the mentor artist's experience teaching or helping someone learn this traditional artform.

Mentor Artist Teaching Experience: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Fully confident the mentor artist has the necessary experience to teach the traditional artform.	The mentor artist has the necessary experience to teach the traditional artform.	Not clear whether the mentor artist has the necessary experience to teach the traditional artform.

Apprentice Artist Profile

Describe the traditional artform you wish to learn.

Provide the apprentice artist's background and experiences in that traditional artform, including:

- How long the apprentice artist has been practicing the traditional artform
- Apprentice artist's current skill level with the traditional artform
- How, when, where the apprentice artist started to learn the traditional artform
- Plans for working with the traditional artform after the apprenticeship is finished

Apprentice Artist Profile: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Apprentice artist demonstrates intermediate experience in the traditional artform.	Apprentice artist demonstrates some experience in the traditional artform.	Apprentice artist demonstrates limited to no experience in the traditional artform.

Mentor Artist and Apprentice Relationship

Describe why the mentor artist and apprentice are interested in working together through this apprenticeship program. As applicable, provide details on past experiences working together on the traditional artform.

Mentor Artist and Apprentice Relationship: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Mentor artist and apprentice have clearly described why they want to work together.	Mentor artist and apprentice have described why they want to work together.	Unclear why the mentor artist and apprentice want to work together.

Proposed Work Plan

Describe what will be taught during the apprenticeship year, including:

- Specific skills and/or techniques the apprentice will learn
- Specific goals the apprentice will meet (e.g. songs learned, objects made, techniques practiced)
- How many times will the mentor artist and apprentice meet during the year
- Length of each meeting
- How the apprentice will document progress (e.g. keep journals, record meetings)

Proposed Work Plan: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Confident apprenticeship will be successful.	Apprenticeship may be successful.	Multiple concerns about the apprenticeship. Work plan provided is insufficient.

Public Event

Describe the public event where the apprentice will be able to share the apprenticeship experience with the wider community, including:

- What the public event will be and how it will be accessible by the public.
- Where and when the public event will take place.

Public Event: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Public event will clearly provide an opportunity for the apprentice to demonstrate the skills they have learned through the apprenticeship program.	Public event may provide an opportunity for the apprentice to demonstrate the skills they have learned through the apprenticeship program.	Unclear if the public event will provide an opportunity for the apprentice to demonstrate the skills they have learned through the apprenticeship program.

Project Budget

Direct Project Expenses

Itemize the eligible direct grant project expenses covered by the requested Iowa Arts Council funds in the table below. Include a line item for the \$3,000 for the mentor artist and \$1,000 for the apprentice artist. Outline up to a \$1,000 in the additional expenses for materials and supplies, related travel, and/or expenses related to the public event. Do not include expenses that will be incurred outside the eligible funding period. Include a brief description of each expense and place the numeric dollar amount for that expense in the next column. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not include dollar signs, decimals or commas.

Total Project Costs/Expenses

Enter the total direct costs and indirect costs (if applicable) outlined in the tables above. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not include dollar signs, decimals or commas.

Additional Project Budget Notes

Provide information to clarify any line item included in the project budget, or to provide further details on the scope of your project budget.

BUDGET: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Budget and intended use of requested funds are clear, appropriate and are relevant to the traditional artform.	Budget and the intended use of requested funds are identified and may be relevant to the traditional artform.	Budget and the intended use of requested funds are unclear or inadequate.

Artistic Work Samples

Submit 5-10 artistic work samples. Include samples from both the mentor artist and apprentice. Artistic work samples should demonstrate the quality of the traditional artform highlighted in the application or the quality of the applicant's past work as it relates to the apprenticeship. Artistic work samples should be recent, high quality, and must represent an artistic work or performance. It can also include images or videos of past events or classes. 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 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.

Include a description with each sample, including:

- Title of the sample
- Date of the work or activity
- Names of artist(s) featured if applicable
- Relevance of the work sample to the proposed apprenticeship
- If an audio or video sample is longer than three minutes, indicate the three-minute segment the panel should view.

Artistic Work Samples: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Artistic work samples are of high quality, relevant to the proposed apprenticeship 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.

Case for Support: 5 points possible		
5	3	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.