

# GREENLIGHT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES



**Iowa Economic Development Authority  
Iowa Arts Council  
Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2025  
Greenlight Grant**

*Revised August 2024.*

The Greenlight Grant program (Program) is administered by the Iowa Arts Council (IAC) on behalf of Produce Iowa-State Office of Film and Media, both of which exist within the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). Through the Program, the IEDA provides financial incentives to Iowa filmmakers who are ready to produce films and media projects that can take them to the next level in their careers and contribute to a more robust, diverse and sustainable creative ecosystem in Iowa.

Greenlight Grants are intended to provide entrepreneurial and collaborative Iowa filmmakers with a financial boost to launch a well-written script to screen and the opportunity to stretch creatively, think big and expand beyond their comfort zones. A goal of the Program is for Iowans to become job creators that grow our film and television industry organically. Priority is given to projects that advance the goals of the [Iowa Arts Council 2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#).

Funding is made possible by an annual appropriation by the Iowa Legislature. Operating and grant policies and definitions set out at 261 IAC Chapter [305](#) and rules pertaining to organization and operation of the IAC found at 261 IAC Chapter [304](#) apply to the Program. Rules specific to the Program can be found at 261 IAC Chapter [307](#). Additional eligibility requirements and priorities are set out in these guidelines published by the IEDA.

Potential applicants, especially first time applicants, are encouraged to review all published material, including the administrative rules and published guidelines, and contact Arts, Film, and Media Coordinator EJ Philby Burton at [ej.philbyburton@iowa.gov](mailto:ej.philbyburton@iowa.gov) well in advance of application deadlines if they have any questions regarding the Program.

The 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 515-348-6324 or [jennie.knoebel@iowaeda.com](mailto:jennie.knoebel@iowaeda.com) at least two weeks in advance of the application deadline.

## **Timeline**

### **June 3, 2024 | Fiscal Year 2025 Application Deadline**

The deadline to submit an online application is 11:59 PM on June 3, 2024 for the funding period July 1, 2024-June 30, 2026.

### **July 2024 | Funding Notification**

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

### **July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2026 | Eligible Funding Period**

The Eligible Funding Period is July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2026. All expenses must be incurred and project activities must be completed within the Eligible Funding Period.

### **August 1, 2025 | Progress Report Deadline**

Grant recipients are required to submit a one year progress report by August 1, 2025 unless the recipient has completed the project and submitted the final report.

### **August 1, 2026 | Final Report Deadline**

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

## **Grant Amounts and Disbursements**

### **One-Time Project Expenses**

Applicants may request funding for eligible **one-time** project expenses incurred and expended within the Eligible Funding Period. The IEDA reserves the right to adjust funding levels based on the quality of submitted applications and available funding.

- Minimum Grant Request: \$10,000
- Maximum Grant Request: \$50,000

### **Disbursement**

One half of the grant funds will be disbursed directly to the individual recipient in a lump sum after execution of the grant agreement. The remaining one half of the award will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis after the grant recipient demonstrates the grant funds and required matching funds have been spent by providing documentation of expenditures and proof of purchase from Iowa vendors on forms provided by the IEDA. Reimbursement requests may be made on a monthly basis or

may be submitted alongside the final report for the grant program. Grant recipients will be required to demonstrate that grant funds and cash match have been spent by providing documentation of expenditures and proof of purchase from Iowa vendors, if applicable, and disclose any other expenses and in-kind donations to the project on final report forms provided by the IEDA. Payments to crew, vendors or service providers must be made within 30 days of receipt of invoices. The grant recipient is responsible for securing any additional funds needed to finance the project.

The IEDA will require repayment of grant funds no later than 30 days after the end of the Eligible Funding Period if the recipient fails to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the IEDA that it has completed the grant project.

## **Applicant Requirements**

### **Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Individual filmmaker who will be legally and financially responsible for project-related expenses, the grant award and meeting contract requirements.
- Current, full-time Iowa resident as described at Iowa Code section 422.4(14) and 701 IAC 300.17.
- 18 years of age or older.
- An application must support a project that is initiated, produced, and/or managed by the individual filmmaker, not an entity or organization.
- Maintain current registration in the [Produce Iowa Production Directory](#).

### **Ineligible Applicants**

Ineligible applicants include the following:

- Organizations and entities, including but not limited to for-profit and nonprofit business entities such as corporations, limited liability partnerships, and sole proprietorships; political parties; and service/professional organizations.
- Artist groups, collaboratives and collectives.
- Individuals that have received grants, loans or other incentives through the IAC or any program administered by the IEDA for fiscal year 2025, that are not in compliance with reporting or other requirements, or that are listed on the IEDA's funding moratorium list.

## **Project Requirements**

### **Eligible Projects and Activities**

To be eligible for funding, the project must include the production and post-production of an original film or digital media project within the state of Iowa. Applicants may request funding to support a specific phase of a larger project within the Eligible Funding Period. However, an applicant may receive support from the IEDA only once in the lifetime of the project. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to apply at a point in the project when state funding will be most impactful.

### **Eligible Project Activities**

Funds must be used for one-time production expenses for goods and services provided by businesses located in Iowa. Examples of eligible project activities include:

- Production.
- Casting.
- Set Construction.
- Location Scouting.
- Costuming.
- Filming.
- Post-production.
- Picture Editing.
- Sound Engineering.
- Musical Scoring.
- Dubbing.
- Animation.
- Sound/Visual Effects.
- Travel outside of the State of Iowa only if the recipient clearly demonstrates how such travel benefits Iowans and the arts community in Iowa.

### **Ineligible Project Activities**

Grant funds cannot be used to pay expenses related to activities that fall outside of identified types of eligible project activities. Examples of ineligible project activities include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Travel that primarily benefits the recipient.
- Pre-production activities.
- Activities that result in receipt by the recipient of course credit, degree or certification.
- Activities that occur before or after the Eligible Funding Period.

## **Genres Eligible for Funding**

The following genres of film or digital media productions are eligible:

- Animation.
- Documentary.
- Episodic.
- Experimental.
- Narrative.
- Reality.

## **Eligible Types of Projects**

The following types of film or digital media productions are eligible:

- Feature, including any future sequels.
- Short.
- Web Series.
- Trailer.
- Episodic, including pilot episodes or new seasons.
- Proof-of-Concept.
- Sizzle Reel.

## **Ineligible Projects**

Projects that fall outside of the identified types of eligible projects will not receive funding through this Program. Ineligible projects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Advertisements.
- Award Shows.
- Commercials.
- Productions with news, talk shows, religious, political, instructional, corporate or obscene content.
- Projects-for-hire.
- Project submitted by an individual 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.
- Separate phases of a project that have already been funded through an Iowa Arts Council grant.

## **Budget Requirements**

### **Eligible Grant Request Expenses**

Greenlight Grants support one-time, direct project expenses that are essential to the completion of the proposed project. Only expenses to be incurred and expended within the Eligible Funding Period may be included in the grant request. Applicants will be required to identify any other anticipated cash expenses and in-kind contributions in the project budget beyond the grant request as well as the anticipated revenue sources that will cover them. Expenses identified in the grant budget should be based on competitive, current market pricing. Except for goods and services that are not available through vendors located in Iowa, only expenses for goods and services that will be acquired through Iowa vendors may be included in the grant request. Applicants may request an [expense exemption](#) to include in the grant request expenses for goods and services that are not available through Iowa vendors. Approval or denial of such requests will be in the sole discretion of the IEDA.

Eligible grant request expenses include direct project costs such as:

- Access accommodations (e.g. audio description, sign-language interpretation, closed or open captioning, large-print brochures/labeling).
- Crew/labor (e.g. director, cinematographer, grip, talent, production assistant).
- Domestic travel (e.g. mileage, accommodation, per diem).
- Marketing (e.g. graphic design, ad buys, web design, publicist).
- Materials (e.g. paint, costumes, props).
- Personnel time dedicated to the project (e.g. planning, execution, evaluation time).\*
- Production rentals (e.g. camera, lighting, sound, props, tents, scissor lift, trucks, portable restrooms, generators).
- Professional services (e.g. insurance, legal, accounting, payroll).
- Support services (e.g. sanitation, construction, security, dry cleaning, florist, craft services).

\*The applicant must demonstrate how personnel time is specifically dedicated to the proposed project. Personnel benefits are not eligible expenses.

### **Ineligible Grant Request Expenses/Ineligible Match Expenses**

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

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

- Alcohol.
- 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.
- Deficit or debt reduction.
- Donations or contributions.
- Equipment purchases.
- Expenses incurred prior to or after the Eligible Funding Period.
- Foreign travel.
- Funding cash reserves.
- Fundraising or benefit activities.
- General miscellaneous or contingency costs.
- Goods or services acquired through vendors located outside of Iowa not approved by the IEDA (grant request expenses only).
- Home studio/office costs or expenses, including utilities and mortgage payments.
- Lobbying activities.
- Membership/dues.
- Personnel time that is not specifically dedicated to the project.
- Personnel benefits.
- Pre-production expenses.
- Prizes and awards.
- Property maintenance, restoration or renovation.

### **Match Requirement**

Applicants are required to demonstrate investment in the project by providing a cash match that is a minimum of 50% of the total grant amount requested from the IEDA. For example, an applicant that requests \$10,000 in grant funds must have at least \$5,000 in cash match for a minimum total project budget of \$15,000. Applicants are responsible for determining what level of funding they can afford to match.

The required cash match must be dedicated to one-time project expenses that are for legitimate project-related activities. Expenses identified in the match should be based on competitive, current market pricing. Applicants must identify all anticipated cash match expenses and in-kind contributions beyond the grant request in the project budget and the anticipated revenue sources that will cover them. The applicant is not required to secure the cash match at the time of application but must secure the cash match during the Eligible Funding Period and identify it in the final report due August 1, 2026.

- 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.
- In-kind match is non-cash goods or services provided at no charge to the project by a third party.
- State or federal funds cannot be used to meet the 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 the IEDA may contact applicants if any additional information is required. New application information or subsequent application clarification submitted after a program deadline may not be considered unless requested by an IEDA program manager. Staff will also review an applicant's record of compliance and good standing with the IAC, 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 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.

If awarded funding, Program award recipients will be asked to provide a professional headshot for the IEDA to use for publicity purposes.

## **Application Process**

### **On-Line Application Only**

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 Questions and Scoring Rubric**

The Greenlight Grant Scoring Rubric will be used by the review panel to evaluate applications. The following application questions are for reference only. Applicants must review and complete application requirements in the SlideRoom portal. Each section has criteria and corresponding point values to ensure a fair review process. The rubric is on a scale of 55 points. Application questions are for reference only.

**Applicant Profile**

**Applicant Profile**

Attach current resume or curriculum vitae (CV) for your film career. Describe your career as an Iowa filmmaker, including:

- The type and quality of productions you make.
- Notable achievements and dates in your film career.
- Continuing education and training.
- How the proposed production will advance your career and work as an Iowa filmmaker.

Applicant Profile: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant demonstrates and supports an active filmmaking career with exceptional capabilities in production quality. Applicant demonstrates a strong record of progress in their film career through relevant notable achievements as well as continuing education and training.	Applicant demonstrates and supports an average experience in the industry. Applicant has identified relevant notable achievements and has received some education or training in the craft.	Applicant demonstrates and supports little to no experience in the industry. Career and type of productions made is unclear or inadequate. Applicant has little to no education or training in the craft of filmmaking.

**Production Details**

**Production Attachment**

Attach one production attachment which may include a pitch package, lookbook, electronic script and/or storyboard to convey your vision. All components of the production attachment should be submitted as one combined file attachment. If production attachment exceeds 10 MB, please attach in the Media section at the end of the application.

**Story/Content**

List relevant slides or pages of production attachment related to Story/Content. Describe the proposed production, including:

- Type and genre.
- Logline.
- Outline.

Story/Content: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Content is exemplary. Story description is clear.	Content is identified. Story description is average.	Content and/or story description is unclear or inadequate.

**Production Team**

List relevant slides or pages of production attachment related to production team. Identify “above-the-line” members of the production team, including:

- Credentials.
- Roles within the project.

**Production Team Résumés or CVs**

Attach current film industry résumés or curricula vitae (CVs) for the "above the line" production team. Combine all files and upload as a single file. File must be less than 10 MB.

Production Team: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Key artistic and logistical production team members and their responsibilities are well-defined and their professionalism will enhance the project.	Key artistic and logistical production team members and their responsibilities are identified.	Artistic or logistical production team members and their responsibilities are unclear or not identified.

**Production Timeline**

List relevant slides or pages of production attachment related to production timeline. Provide a production timeline and any shoot schedules, detailing when project activities will occur. Be sure to include all phases of pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. Consider also including when key artistic decisions will be made and events will occur, as applicable. If you include activities that occur outside of the Eligible Funding Period for context, indicate that by adding an asterisk

(\*). Deadlines can be listed as the month the project will be complete, such as “September 2024”, rather than a specific date.

Production Timeline: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Confident project will be successfully realized due to extensive planning and a clear, realistic timeline for pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. Project is clearly achievable through the identified timeline.	Applicant demonstrates average planning and identifies a timeline for pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. Project appears achievable through the identified timeline.	Timeline and planning for pre-production, production, post-production and distribution are unclear, inadequate or unrealistic. Multiple concerns about project achievability.

**Impact on Creative Economy**

Describe the public value of the production, which is how the project will contribute to building a more robust and sustainable film industry in Iowa through job creation and patronage of small businesses, including:

- Number of job positions that will be created.
- Plans for job shadowing or professional development of Iowa students.
- Economic impact to rural or economically-challenged areas of the state.
- Plans for leveraging grant funds to secure more outside funding and future investors.

Impact on Creative Economy: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Production will significantly impact and benefit the film industry in Iowa. Project will create many job opportunities and need for special services. Applicant has outlined well-defined plans to grow outside financial support for the project.	Production will adequately benefit the film and media industry in Iowa. An average number of job opportunities will be created. Applicant has outlined average plans to grow outside financial support for the project.	Production will not have a significant impact on the film industry in Iowa. Few job opportunities will be created. Applicant has outlined inadequate plans to grow outside financial support for project, or has not outlined plans at all.

**Project Marketing and Distribution**

List relevant slides or pages of production attachment related to Project Marketing and Distribution. Describe any marketing and distribution plans for the finished project, including:

- Methods of distribution, including festival names, locations, and dates; streaming platforms; self-distribution; and other methods.

- Scale of distribution, including plans for outside of Iowa (local, national, international).
- Plans for marketing, including industry contacts and relationships that will be utilized.
- How the marketing and distribution plans will be implemented.

Project Marketing and Distribution: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Project will be successfully distributed and viewed by a larger audience outside of the state, based upon the strategies and platform for distribution. Applicant has an impressive plan for film festival submissions.	Project might be successfully distributed and viewed by an audience outside of the state, based upon the strategies and platform for distribution. Applicant has an average plan for film festival submissions.	Project is unlikely to be successfully distributed, nor seen by a larger audience outside of the state, based upon the strategies and platform for distribution. Applicant has an inadequate plan for film festival submissions.

### **Project Budget**

#### **Production Budget**

[Download](#) and re-attach a completed copy of the Production Budget Template document. This document should include a full, itemized list of all anticipated production budget expenses. Applicants must fill out this template **and** the remaining components of the project budget section of this application.

If there are slides or pages of the production attachment related to the production budget, they may be listed here.

#### **Total Grant Request Amount**

Enter total amount of grant funding being requested to support the project. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not include dollar signs, commas or decimals.

#### **Total Cash Match**

Enter total amount of cash match the applicant will be providing to support the project. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not include dollar signs, commas or decimals.

Budget: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Project budget and intended use of requested funds are clear and appropriate. Project demonstrates financial support by leveraging diverse sources of funding for cash match and in-kind expenses.	Project budget, intended use of requested funds and sources of funding for cash match and in-kind expenses are identified.	Project budget, intended use of requested funds or sources of funding for cash match and in-kind expenses are unclear or inadequate.

**Work Samples**

Submit 3-5 work samples of past productions that relate to the proposed film, TV or digital media project. Work samples may not be bios, testimonials, news articles or marketing material such as brochures, fliers or posters.

- Video and audio files should not exceed 3 minutes each.
- PDF files should not exceed 2 pages each.
- Panelists will not view more than 2 pages of a document or more than 3 minutes of an audio or video file.

Work Samples: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Work samples are of high quality and clearly demonstrate exceptional capabilities in concept and form.	Work samples are of average quality and demonstrate capabilities in concept and form.	Work samples are of poor quality or demonstrate inadequate capabilities in concept and form.

**Overall Application**

**Optional Support Narrative**

Use this additional space to communicate to the panelists anything essential to the project that was not already covered in this grant application. Do not use this space to continue an answer from earlier questions. The support narrative should include new information only. This space allows a maximum of 1,000 characters and is entirely optional.

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

Iowa Film Industry Impact: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Project will clearly elevate the Iowa filmmaking community, substantially impact future production and the vitality of the media industry in Iowa, and position Iowa as a filmmaking destination.	Project may elevate the Iowa filmmaking community, will reasonably impact future production and the vitality of the media industry in Iowa, and may position Iowa as a filmmaking destination.	Project does not appear to elevate the Iowa filmmaking community, does not adequately impact future production and the vitality of the media industry in Iowa, and does not position Iowa as a filmmaking destination.

Case for Support: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Case for support is exemplary and merits investment from the state.	Case for support is adequate.	Case for support is inadequate or does not merit state investment.

Public Interest: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Project tells a story that is highly important and relevant to Iowans and needs to be told to a larger audience.	Project tells a story that is somewhat important and relevant to Iowans. The project may benefit from being told to a larger audience.	Project does not tell a story that is important or relevant to Iowans. The necessity of reaching a larger audience is unclear or poorly defined.

### **Glossary of Terms and Definitions**

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