



IAWA Economic Development

IAWA ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES

IAWA ARTIST FELLOWSHIP

Fiscal Year 2027

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.

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.
- **Program Readiness:** Artist is at a pivotal stage 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.

Operating and grant policies 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 Produce Iowa Program Manager EJ Philby Burton at ej.philbyburton@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

Interested applicants may fill out the application in the Iowa Arts Council SlideRoom portal.

April 1, 2026 | Fiscal Year 2027 Application Deadline

The deadline to submit the full online application is 11:59 PM on April 1, 2026, for the funding period July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027.

June 2026 | Funding Decision Notification

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

July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 | Eligible Funding Period

The fellowship year will run from July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027. All grant project expenses must be incurred and activities must be completed within the eligible funding period.

August 2, 2027 | Final Report Deadline

Fellowship recipients are required to complete a final report by August 2, 2027.

GRANT AMOUNTS AND DISBURSEMENT

Fellows are awarded a \$10,000 grant over the fellowship award period to support the development of their artistic practice and to enhance their capacity for creative work. Grantees will receive 75% of the grant amount in a lump sum after the execution of the grant agreement. The remaining 25% of the grant award funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis after the grant recipient demonstrates the grant funds have been spent by providing documentation of expenditures and proof of purchase on forms provided by IEDA. Recipients will need to complete a final report at the end of the eligible funding period. The IEDA will require repayment of disbursed grant funds no later than 30 days after the final report deadline if the recipient fails to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the IEDA that the grantee has completed the grant requirements.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

The Iowa Artist Fellowship combines funding, professional development, and networking opportunities to strengthen the overall capacity of Iowa artists. Fellows are expected to participate in the Iowa Artist Retreat and are encouraged to engage in other 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 practice and are committed to advancing their art in Iowa. Applicants are expected to demonstrate why now is the appropriate time 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 will have opportunities to convene during the fellowship period to receive professional development to elevate their artistic practices, including:

- Iowa Artist Retreat – Current Fellows are required to attend the Iowa Artist Retreat, held annually in the fall. The in-person retreat will integrate business management, strategic planning, fundraising, communication, marketing and promotion training for artistic practices. Fellowship grant funds may be used to pay for costs of attending the retreat and should be accounted for in the grant budget. Other Iowa artists may also apply to attend the Retreat.
 - **The retreat will take place on November 6-7, 2026.**

- One-on-One Mentorship
 - Fellows will receive a one-on-one consultation with an expert in finance and business practices for creative individuals.
 - Fellows may choose to pursue additional mentorship opportunities including business coaching or peer artist mentorship as part of their Fellowship. They may request assistance finding a mentor if they do not already have one identified. Fellowship grant funds may be used to pay a mentor or coach for their time and should be accounted for in the grant budget.
- 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 activities taking place across the state.

Promotion

The Iowa Arts Council will provide opportunities to promote Iowa Artist Fellows throughout their Fellowship period.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Individual artist, including visual or performing artist, filmmaker, musician or creative writer.
- 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 Iowa Administrative Code 701.300.17 (422).
- Full-time Iowa resident since April 1, 2023, and will remain so 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 April 1, 2026.
- Individuals who have resided out of state for any of the three consecutive years immediately prior to April 1, 2026.
- 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.
- Individuals that have received a fiscal year 2027 grant from the Iowa Arts Council or have an active Greenlight Grant contract.

BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Grant Request Expenses

Iowa Artist Fellowship grants support one-time, direct expenses that help an artist develop their artistic practice and enhance their capacity for creative work over the course of the fellowship year. Applicants should demonstrate how the expenses will help them achieve their stated goal over the fellowship year. Expenses identified in the grant request should be based on competitive, current market pricing. Applicants can include expenses related to paying a mentor and participating in the 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, temporary childcare)
- Rentals (e.g. stages, studio space, lighting/sound, scissor lift, portable restrooms)
- Supplies the cost of which is less than \$10,000 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:

- 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 \$10,000
- Contingency for major project scope changes, unforeseen risks, or extraordinary events

- Costs of goods for resale, including concessions or promotional merchandise such as clothing or items purchased for sale, and any staffing, technology, or facilities costs related to retail activities
- Costs for the creation of new organizations
- Costs supported by any other state funding
- Deficit or debt reduction
- Donations or contributions to other organizations
- Expenses incurred prior to or after the eligible funding period
- Food, beverage and alcohol. Food and beverage may be included if they have a clear programmatic purpose.
- Foreign travel
- Funding cash reserve
- Fundraising or benefit activity expenses, including events or other activities only open to donors
- Gifts and Prizes
- Home studio/office costs or expenses, including utilities and mortgage payments
- Lobbying activities
- 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
- Religious activities
- Social activities such as receptions, parties, community dinners, picnics and potlucks
- Tuition, fees or project activity that results in an applicant's undergraduate or graduate course credit, degree or certification
- Unrealized ticket or event revenue, i.e., providing free tickets or scholarships to attend an event
- Visa costs paid to the federal government

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 an 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 iowaarts council.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 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 45 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. A strong record of career progress is demonstrated through relevant, notable achievements.	Applicant describes practice, concept, form of work and career progress with some relevant notable achievements.	Career activity, concept and form of work are unclear or inadequate. 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 the 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.

Public Value

Describe how the applicant's artistic practice contributes to the vitality of the arts in Iowa, including:

- Intended public impact of the applicant's artistic practice
- How the applicant engages Iowa communities or audiences
- How Iowans benefit from the applicant's practice

Provide specific examples from the applicant's artistic practice to demonstrate impact on Iowa communities or audiences.

PUBLIC VALUE: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant has clear, exemplary impact on the vitality of the arts in Iowa by engaging Iowa communities or audiences through their artistic practice.	Applicant satisfactorily demonstrates the impact their artistic practice has on the vitality of the arts in Iowa.	Applicant does not sufficiently demonstrate the impact their practice has on the vitality of the arts in Iowa.

Program Readiness

Describe why it is the appropriate and pivotal time for the applicant to receive the Iowa Artist Fellowship including:

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

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

advancing artistic practice over the fellowship period.		advancing artistic practice over the fellowship period.
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Artistic Practice 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 practice 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.

ARTISTIC PRACTICE 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 practice and/or dramatically increase their capacity for creative work	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 practice and/or increase their capacity for creative work.	Goal is unclear and/or the identified goal is not likely to impact the applicant's artistic practice or increase their capacity for creative work.

Budget – *This section will be factored into the Case for Support score and will be reviewed by staff for compliance.*

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. Explain how the expenditures will help to achieve the stated goal over the fellowship year. If the applicant intends to purchase any equipment, provide justification for this expenditure.

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 three pages each.
- Each PDF should only represent one work sample (i.e. one poem would be considered one work sample).
- Panelists will not be required to view more than three pages of a work sample 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
- If an audio or video sample is longer than three minutes, indicate the three-minute segment the panel should view.
- If a visual art sample, note the artistic medium being presented in the sample and the dimensions of the actual piece.

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.

OVERALL ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Artwork achieves unique artistic vision through highly creative means in concept and form exemplifying excellence or innovation in the field.	Artwork demonstrates artistic vision through creative means in concept and form.	Artwork does not demonstrate artistic vision through creative means in concept and form or does not exemplify excellence or innovation in the field.

OVERALL ARTISTIC MERIT: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant has a significant and relevant impact on the cultural landscape of Iowa by practicing an artform that is not widely practiced in Iowa and/or reaching an audience that does	Applicant has an impact on the cultural landscape of Iowa by practicing an artform that is regularly practiced in Iowa and/or reaching an audience that has some access to their artform.	Applicant practices an artform that is widely practiced in Iowa and/or reaches an audience that has sufficient access to their artform.

not typically have access to their artform.		
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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.