

Illinois
ARTS
Council

Creative Catalyst

Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2025
Open Deadline Application

State of Illinois
JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois Arts Council
Nora Daley, Chair
Joshua Davis-Ruperto, Executive Director

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Link [About the Illinois Arts Council Agency](#)

Link [IAC Salesforce Grant Portal](#)

Link [IAC Accessibility Resources](#)

Link [IAC Glossary](#)

Accessible Guidelines

To obtain accessibility information regarding applications and written materials contact the Agency’s ADA/504 Access Coordinator. Please be aware staff is working remotely and it is recommended to reach out to them via email. If you prefer more direct communications send an email that contains your preferred contact telephone number and general timeline of when you are available.

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Illinois Arts Council Staff Contacts

For specific information on this grant, contact the appropriate program staff. Please be aware staff are working a hybrid model and it is recommended to reach out to them via email. If you prefer more direct communications send an email that contains your preferred contact telephone number and general timeline of when you are available. For technical assistance contact the Program Representative listed at the bottom.

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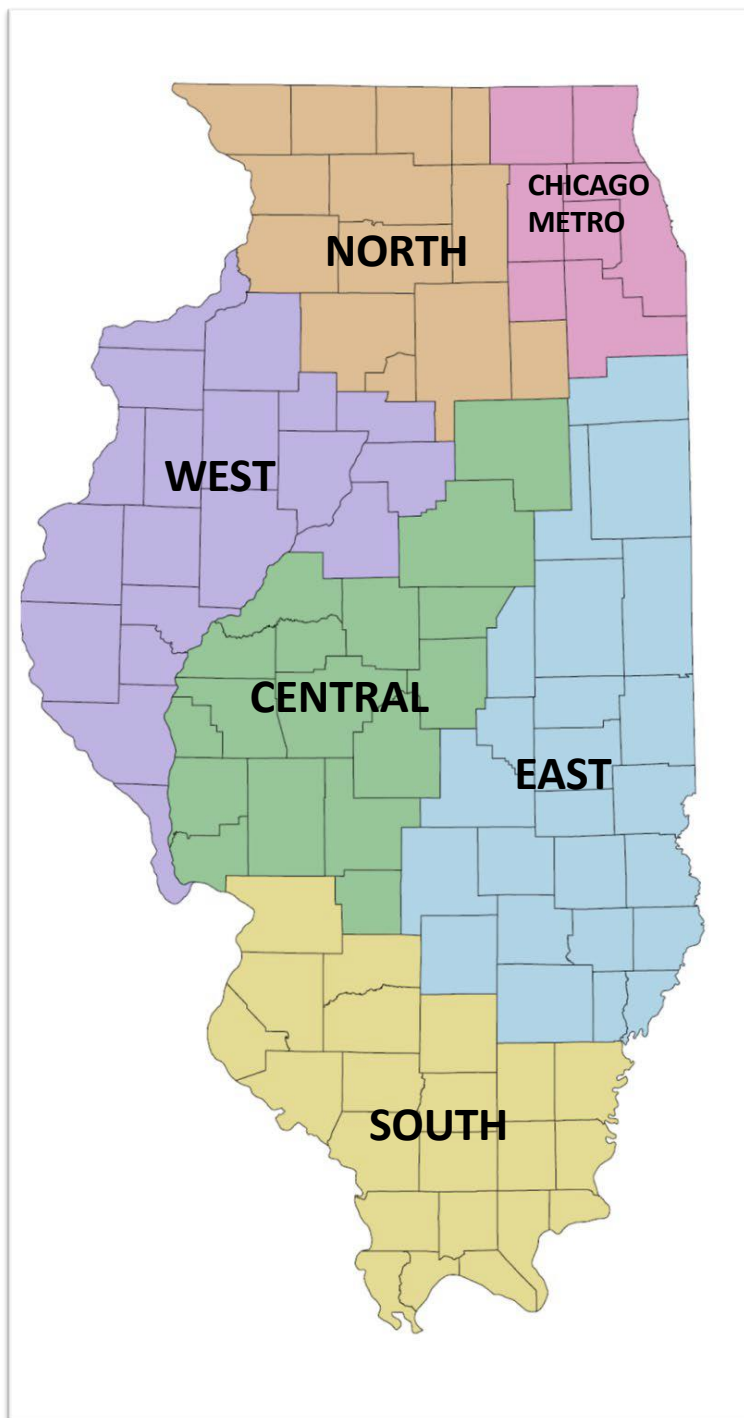
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To determine your Program Director please visit IAC's
Program Director finder tool:

<https://arts.illinois.gov/about-iac/staff/grant-staff-locator.html>



A New Arts Council

In 2023, the Illinois Arts Council (IAC) and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) embarked on the Equitable Grant Making Assessment Initiative (EGAIN). EGAIN was a collaborative effort to examine the agency's grantmaking through an equity lens, to identify funding gaps, and recommend strategies that the agency can pursue to reduce barriers to arts support.

The aims of the initiative were to:

- Analyze the demographic distribution of IAC's general operating support awards.
- Engage IAC constituents in providing feedback about their needs, experiences, and perceptions.
- Identify equity strengths and weaknesses in the IAC's approach to general operating support funding.
- Recommend applied actions the IAC can take to work toward greater grant making equity.
- Serve as an evidence base in IAC's case for the resources needed to reach more Illinois communities with state support.

As a result of this initiative there have been significant changes to all IAC grant programs which include:

- Streamlined application processes and grant opportunities.
- The creation of six distinct regions within the state for equitable funding across the Illinois' communities.
 - Chicago Metro Region
 - Northern Region
 - Central Region
 - Eastern Region
 - Southern Region
 - Western Region
- Applications will be reviewed and distributed by regions and will no longer be submitted by discipline categories.
- Factoring in historically under-resourced communities of rural, high-poverty, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), and disability into the grant making structure and process.

What does this mean for IAC arts project support?

Creative Catalyst is a new IAC grant program that supports arts project and programming requests from individuals, 501(c)(3) organizations, units of government (i.e., schools, parks, and libraries, etc.) or institutions of higher education. The general premise is that IAC no longer sets parameters for arts projects, but applicants drive what arts projects need funding. IAC will not be evaluating the "value" of the project, but only its viability.

We recognize that this is a significant change to IAC's programs, but we are excited by the possibility of supporting more arts projects throughout the state. We are proud that the Illinois Arts Council has been able to provide support to so many Illinois artists and cultural organizations over the past 59 years.

Creative Catalyst Grant Summary

The Illinois Arts Council (IAC) Creative Catalyst Grant offers support to Illinois artists and non-profit organizations for arts-related projects, programming, events, and/or professional development. Creative Catalyst replaces IAC's previous grant programs: Artstour & Live Music, Short-term Teaching Artist Residencies, and Individual Artist Support. Applications previously considered under those grant programs are all eligible for Creative Catalyst.

Who's Eligible

- Individual Artists, Arts Educators, and Curators
- Registered 501(c)(3) Not-For-Profit Organizations in good standing with the Office of the Illinois Secretary of State
- Branches of Government (e.g., Municipal, County, Libraries, Park Districts, etc.)
- Charitable Trusts
- School, Institutions of higher education, and churches
- PTOs, PTAs, and other School Affiliate Organizations

Award Amount

- Up to \$12,000.

Application Information

- The application requests information about the arts project that will take place during the grant period. Narrative information and a budget are required.
- IAC General Operating Support (GOS) grantees must demonstrate how the project is a unique opportunity outside of their daily operations and programming.

Matching Requirement

- None

Key Dates

Application Deadline:

- A minimum of 8 weeks prior to the project start date. Applications per-region will remain open until funds are fully expended for that region.

Grant Period:

- At least 8 weeks after application submission to August 31, 2025

Creative Catalyst Grant Details

Applicants must:

- Apply utilizing a Salesforce grant portal account registered to the applicant.
- Submit all required application materials a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the arts project start date.

Making Programs Accessible to All

Recipients of public funding are required to make reasonable efforts for programs to be accessible to the public. For further information and resources see the [Accessibility Resources](#) page on the IAC website.

Applicant Restrictions

- Applicants may only submit one application per fiscal year.
- Organizations with which IAC Board members are affiliated are eligible to apply. However, a Board member may not be the authorizing official signing any documents relating to an application or grant award.

Deadline

The FY25 Creative Catalyst Grant is an open deadline grant program. Applications will be accepted until allotted funds have been expended. Each [IAC region](#) has its own allocation so regions may close at different times. Applications must be submitted to the [IAC's Salesforce grant portal](#) a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the start date of the arts project being considered for IAC funding.

Please note that all draft applications will be removed from the IAC system 30 days after the grant program closes.

Grant Period

FY25 Creative Catalyst Grant supports activities occurring at least 8 weeks after application submission and extending until August 31, 2025.

Please note the grant period start date may change depending on the review process and/or the applicant's timeliness in grant acceptance.

Artstour Roster

[The Artstour Roster](#) is a resource listing of Illinois artists available for touring. The Artstour Roster features hundreds of Illinois touring artists, companies, and groups working in dance, mime, interdisciplinary performance, music, performance poetry, spoken word, storytelling, and theater. The Artstour Roster was created in collaboration between the Illinois Presenters Network and the Illinois Arts Council. The Artstour Roster is used by Illinois presenters including schools, libraries, park districts, and community organizations, and performing arts presenters to identify artists, companies, and groups to perform in their communities. An artist's acceptance to the Artstour Roster is not required of this granting program. Please note that the Artstour Roster is currently under evaluation for updates. Should the link above stop working while Creative Catalyst is open please check the [IAC website](#) or [Illinois Presenters Network](#) website for an updated list.

Allowable and Unallowable Expenses

IAC Creative Catalyst funds may be used to support eligible expenses associated with the proposed art project.

Detailed Allowable Expenses, not limited to:

- Fees for artists and contractual personnel. Artists must be compensated at best practice levels including prep time.
 - If teaching artists are included in the project, they must be compensated at best practice levels

including prep time.

- All artists, companies, ensembles, etc. that receive money from this grant must be Illinois residents.
- Up to 15% of administrative expenses. For organizations this may include staff salaries, rent, etc. For individual artists this may include fees to self, studio rental, etc.
- If the project is to offer a class, that class must be offered to participants for free.
- Generally, equipment costs. For durable equipment with a useful life of more than one-year equipment may not exceed \$3,000.
- Consumable supply costs, office supplies, printing, art supplies, etc.
- Marketing and promotion costs
- Professional development opportunities such as conferences and trainings. This is the only activity outside of Illinois that IAC may support.

Detailed Unallowable Expenses, not limited to:

- Creative Catalyst Grant funds may not be used for re-granting or cash awards.
- The Council will not support subsidizing an individual's academic study or projects associated with that study.
- The Council will not support any activity outside of the United States.
- The Council will not support out-of-state touring or project activity (unless it is Professional Development as described under Allowable Expenses).
- The Council will not support fees or payments to artists, companies, ensembles, etc. that are not based in Illinois.
- Council funds may not be used for the purchase of alcoholic beverages.
- Council funds may not be used for capital improvements, construction, or for the purchase of permanent equipment unless the purchase falls under the \$3000 cap noted under allowable expenses.
- Council funds may not be used to pay the balance of an organization's previous year's operating deficit.
- Except for state colleges/ universities, state agencies and their affiliates are ineligible to receive funds from the IAC. State agencies are those entities defined by the Office of the Comptroller in Procedure 27.50.10 in the SAMS manual.
- The Council will not support fundraisers or benefits.
- Council funds may not be used for political activities such as contributions, lobbying, or fundraisers.

Examples of Projects

Examples of projects include, but are not limited to:

- A public librarian engages a poet to conduct a weekly writing workshop for senior adults that will culminate in a public reading of their work.
- A schoolteacher engages a visual artist to work daily with her third-grade classroom during science block on the study of the planetary system.
- A park district engages two theater artists to work for six weeks during the summer to present a play with community members with disabilities.
- A theatre company collaborates with a folk musician in the creation and presentation of a new play.
- Attendance at conferences or artist residency, writers' retreats, or workshops
- Marketing, e.g., artist brochures, actors' headshots, distribution of a manuscript, website development
- Documentation of artwork, exhibitions, and exhibition catalogues
- Duplication of manuscripts or media (film, video, audio, etc.)
- Music or Audio studio recordings, or post-production and screenings of film or video
- Performances

Creative Catalyst Grant Review Criteria

The review of Creative Catalyst grant applications is based on successful evidence of the answers to the following application requirements:

- 1. Application completeness**
 - All required fields and attachments have been correctly completed and are in the requested format.
- 2. Narrative details an arts project, programming, or professional development opportunity**
- 3. Budget submitted includes standard industry expectations for costs such as rentals, fees, supplies, etc.**
- 4. Project described is feasible**
 - Application provides evidence that the project will take place as described.
- 5. Eligible to receive funds from the State of Illinois**
 - Organizational applicants are in good standing with the Secretary of State
 - Individual artists can show proof they have been an Illinois resident for a minimum of 1 year.
 - Applicant is compliant with IAC requirements.
 - Applicant is not on the Illinois Stop Payment List. Organizations may be placed on the Illinois Stop Payment List for not being in compliance with all state agencies. Examples include owing money to another state agency or not being up to date with reporting on state grants.

Creative Catalyst Process, Notification, and Compliance

Review Process

- When the application is created, the Salesforce grant portal will issue an application number that will be used in future communication regarding that application.
 - Applications which have been ruled ineligible or incomplete will not be reviewed.
 - Applications are reviewed based on the review criteria (see page 7).
 - The final recommendations are presented to the IAC board for their consideration and approval.
 - A record of the review process is maintained for all reviewed applications; applicants may reach out for review feedback after receiving decision notification.
-

Notification

All applicants will be notified of funding decisions once the IAC has reviewed and approved funding recommendations. Applicants approved for funding will:

- Receive, via email, instructions regarding requirements to accept and claim the grant (see Grant Acceptance section below).
- Once all documents have been returned via the IAC Salesforce grant portal and all requirements met, including the completion, and filing of all previous fiscal year Final Reports, the grant will be processed, and the payment voucher will be sent to the office of the State Comptroller for payment.
- **Once the payment voucher has been received by the State Comptroller payments can take two to six months.**

Grantees can check the status of the grant payment through the [Comptroller's vendor website](#), or sign-up to be notified about the payment via email, text, or both. Grantees can also sign up for direct deposit from the Illinois Comptroller. Grantees are eligible for direct deposits if they have received a payment from The Comptroller's Office within the previous 24 months. Otherwise, the check will be mailed to the address on file. Please contact The Comptroller's Office at (217) 557-0930 if you would like to set up direct deposit.

Compliance

Grant Acceptance

For awards to be processed all grant acceptance documents must be submitted to the IAC Grants Office. Grant acceptance is a multi-step process that requires uploads to the Salesforce grant portal and email exchanges. It is the responsibility of the applicant to read all emails carefully and follow the instructions. The documents to be submitted via the IAC Salesforce grant portal include:

- Completed and signed W9 form.
- Copies of letters submitted to legislators. Organizations that receive an IAC award are required to notify by letter their state representative, state senator, and the Office of the Governor of the grant amount and the project or program it helps support. Prior to mailing the letters to the legislators, make electronic copies of the letters to include with your grant acceptance materials.
- Legal Status Disclosure Certificate (LSDC) signed and dated by the authorizing official.
- Grant Agreement signed and dated by the authorizing official.

Applicants approved for funding will be requested to upload a W9 and copies of the legislative letters to [IAC's Salesforce grant portal](#). Following the upload of these documents the Authorizing Official will be sent a link to sign the grant agreement and LSDC via Formstack.

Final Report

All FY25 Creative Catalyst grantees will be required to complete and submit a final report no later than September 30, 2025, as stated on the grant agreement.

The final report for Creative Catalyst grants will ask:

- Brief narrative response on if the activity took place as described in the application and if there were any challenges
- Was the activity documented, and if so, how
- Total project budget revenue and expense including IAC funds
- Brief explanation if the overall project expense was greater than the project income
- Attendance for different activities and events both in-person and online
- Populations benefited by race, age, or distinct group
- Addresses for all activity locations
- Optional quote on the impact of the grant and photo with photo credit

Crediting Requirements

Grant recipients must credit the IAC in all promotional material and public notices in the following manner:

“<YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME> acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.”



For further information regarding usage of the logo and to download a copy, go to the [logo page](#) of the IAC website.

Application Overview

IAC utilizes an [online grant portal](#), powered by Salesforce, to accept applications. The IAC Creative Catalyst Grant online application consists of form field components and the uploading of required documents. Each component must be completed and submitted in the required format by the deadline.

For instructions go to the [Using Salesforce](#) section of the IAC website. There is also a [user manual](#) for the online grant portal on our website to help guide the application process. Please review this carefully and use as a reference.

If your organization has a new individual managing grants, they must make a new user account here: <https://arts-illinois.my.site.com/>. Notify your IAC Program Director when that is complete, and the new user will be assigned as the owner of the organizational account and past applications.

How to Apply

First:

- Verify eligibility.
- Prepare all required supporting documents (see page 13) and save them as PDFs.

Next:

- Log into [IAC Salesforce grant portal](#)
- Click on the Applicant Information tab.
 - New Applicants should add an organizational applicant account and fill in all required form fields.
 - Returning Applicants should make sure all information is up to date.
- Click on the Grant Programs tab.
- Select the “Creative Catalyst – 2025” grant program.
 - Complete the form fields in the application.
 - Upload all required attachments.
- Successfully submit the application to IAC Salesforce grant portal.

Application Components

1. Applicant Information

Under this tab, please create or update the entity applying for the grant.

This tab requires the following information for:

Organizations:

- Organization Name and General Contact Information
- Year Founded or year organization began arts programming
- Organization Mission
- Primary Discipline Selection – select one
 - Colleges and Universities with multiple applications – please select multidisciplinary as the primary discipline and the specific applicant disciplines as the additional disciplines.
- Any additional disciplines reflected in programming – select as many as applicable
- Staff and Board overall demographic information. Note that staff is those individuals the organization requires to maintain daily operations. Staff is not necessarily defined as paid positions.

- Number of Board Members
- Number of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Board Members
- Number of Staff Members
- Number of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Staff Members
- Contact information for Authorizing Official, Executive Director, Board President, and Accessibility Coordinator (a designated staff member responsible for overseeing accessibility).
- UEI number (12 characters) and FEIN number (10 characters, including hyphen, e.g. 12-3456789).
 - For all applicants with an established SAM.gov account (active or inactive) the UEI number can be found by logging into your SAM.gov account. All applicants must enter their new UEI number in the Applicant Information tab during the application process.

Individuals:

- Individual Name and General Contact Information
- Primary Discipline Selection – select one
- Any additional disciplines reflected in programming – select as many as applicable
- Checkboxes if individual identifies as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) or has a disability.

Please note the information in the Applicant Information tab may be updated at any time. Please keep the contacts current to ensure communications from IAC reach the appropriate staff or board members.

2. Grant Programs Selection

Under the Grant Programs tab select the “Creative Catalyst – 2025.” If the user has multiple applicants set up, the system will prompt the selection of the applicant organization to move forward.

On this main section please also provide:

- Department, if applicable
- Applicant’s Website, if different than what is submitted on the Applicant Information tab
- Confirmation that the Applicant Information tab has been updated
- Grant Notification Official name and email
- Project Start Date
- Project End Date
- Project Address
- Request Amount
- What type of event (select one)
 - One-time event
 - Series
 - Seed money for future program
 - Professional Development
 - Other – if selected please fill in a description

Please note that after any application is started it will appear on the home screen in the Salesforce grant portal. Within the grant application the requirements/sections will be listed along the left-side of the screen.

3. Supporting Documents

The supporting documents to be uploaded as attachments are:

1. Application Narrative
2. Proof of Project Feasibility

Please refer to the "Supporting Documents" section for instructions.

Formatting Supporting Documents

Documents should adhere to the following formatting guidelines:

- Be saved as PDF files
- Be 8 ½ " x 11" with at least a 1" margin
- Use a 12-point or larger black type on a white background
- Uploaded supporting documents may be no larger than 25MB in size

4. Financial Information / Budget

Please complete the financial information tab with the details on your project budget. On the first table please fill in IAC expenses:

- Contractual Services
- Space Rental
- Travel & Lodging
- Marketing
- Supplies
- Equipment (up to \$3,000)
- Administrative Expenses (up to 15% of total grant)
- Other (please specify)

On the second table please fill in any non-IAC expenses with their cost description and source of income.

5. Submit / Certification

Please note this is a two-step process to both certify and submit your application. Once the application is complete click the Submit Button in the lower left-hand corner. A pop-up will require certification of eligibility and application content.

After certification there is a submit button which must be clicked to complete the application in the [IAC Salesforce grant portal](#). The application will not be successfully submitted until the second submit button is clicked.

Supporting Documents

1. Application Narrative

The narrative is limited to one page and should be organized using the bold-face headings in the order they appear below.

Description of Activity / Event

- Clearly describe the project, or professional development opportunity.
- Include details on the timeline of the project and public performance date(s).

Geographic Area Served

- Describe the area of Illinois that will benefit from this project.

Intended Outcomes

- Describe what you are hoping to accomplish.

Artist's Pay

- Describe your pay range for artists and staff involved. The IAC advocates for all artist to be paid.

For General Operating Support grantees

- Describe how this project is unique and not part of daily operations.

Submit this document as a PDF file named: Applicant Name_Narrative

2. Proof of Project Feasibility

This supporting document should demonstrate that the arts project, event, or professional development opportunity will take place. It is acceptable, but not required, that the project demonstrates need for IAC funding to take place.

This can be a fully executed contract, memo of agreement, or an email between the mutual parties.

Submit this document as a PDF file named: Applicant Name_Feasibility

For general information contact:

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Visit the [Illinois Arts Council Board Members](#) page for a complete list of current board members.

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The IAC acknowledges continuous support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

It is illegal for the Illinois Arts Council Agency or anyone receiving assistance from the Illinois Arts Council Agency to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, non-binary and gender non-conforming employees, sexual harassment, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, physical or mental disability, political affiliation, beliefs, age, order of protection status, any other non-merit status, marital status, pregnancy, arrest record, military status, veterans status or unfavorable discharge from military service. Any individual who has been subject to such discrimination may file a complaint with the Illinois Department of Human Rights at +1 (312) 814-6200 or TTY +1 (312) 263-1570.