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What is the Indiana Arts Commission?
The Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) is a state agency funded by the Indiana General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. Our mission is to positively impact the cultural, economic and educational climate of Indiana by providing responsible leadership for and public stewardship of artistic resources for all of our state’s citizens and communities. Our vision is arts everywhere, every day, for everyone in Indiana.
Learn more about IAC >

What is the Regional Arts Partnership?
Representing eleven regions in our state, Regional Arts Partners (RAP) work alongside the Indiana Arts Commission to promote and expand participation in the arts in Indiana and help award national and state allocated funds in the areas of Arts Project Support and Arts Organization Support, Levels I and II. Partners, like the IAC, convene panels in their region. These panelists have strong awareness of the applicants and, more importantly, the cultural needs of the people living in that community. Funding recommendations made at the local level are reviewed and approved by the Indiana Arts Commission. Local decision making enhances the sense of investment in, and pride for, the arts at the local level.
Learn more about the RAP >

Why be a grant panelist?
As a panelist, you will:
• Make new connections with artists, organizations, and colleagues
• Learn about clever ideas, innovative projects, and the folks making things happen
• Develop grant making skills
• Be part of decision-making in state government

What does a panelist do?
Prior to panel day, grant panelists evaluate, score, and comment on all assigned grant applications, and then convene with their panel colleagues to publicly review each application and determine final scores. As a panelist, you will:
• Participate in panelist orientation/training to learn about the program and panel process
• Review the list of applicants provided by your program manager and complete a Conflict of Interest form – If you have a conflict, inform your program manager as soon as possible
• Read and Score all assigned applications before the public panel meeting
• Participate in the public panel meeting to discuss each application
• Provide feedback to help improve the application(s) and overall process
• Agree not to share applicant information with anyone.

How long does it take?
Everyone is different, *but* below are some averages. To ballpark, if you’re evaluating 15 applications, total time could be around 20-25 hours, not including travel.
• Orientation training: ½ - 1 hr
• Application evaluation: 1 hr/application
• Panel day: 2.5 hrs (30 min pre-meeting + 5-7 min/application + 30 min wrap-up)

How do I prepare for panel day?
Before panel day, you will use the online system to evaluate (comment and score) all applications assigned to you. You will pay special attention to those you are assigned as a first or second reader (see “Panel Day” for detail).
• Participate in panelist orientation – this will teach you about the program, process, and how to navigate the online system.
• Review the Application List, fill out a Conflict of Interest form – if you have a conflict, let your program manager know as soon as possible.
• Once conflicts are determined, you will receive an updated Application list (sample below) with reader assignments.
• Allow ample time to review applications (takes about an hour each)
• Remember to provide constructive comments on applications, both online and on panel day.
• Access and evaluate applications through the IAC online system (tutorial here).
• Listen to past panels for further assistance – Arts Organization Support • Arts Project Support
• Check out these example panelist comments
• Sometimes panelists like to print evaluation criteria rating sheets: AOS (I/II)  |  APS
  New in 2020, AOSI/II and APS criteria are in the form of questions in the online system.
• Watch the Community Engagement for Organizations video
• Review the program guidelines here
How do I evaluate applications?
You know you need to evaluate applications, but what exactly does that mean?
Evaluation criteria and guidance is provided for you directly in the system. You review the applicable areas and score based upon the extent to which the applicant addresses that criteria. Use your experience, best judgement, and scoring guidance to determine the score.
- Score using provided evaluation criteria only (need is not a criteria)
- Only evaluate what’s provided, including links (do not use outside information)
- Do not compare applications. Smaller organizations should be evaluated based upon their own merit and not compared to larger organizations to which they cannot compete.
- Use Chrome, Firefox, or Safari – they work best with the online system
- When scoring, extremely low scores are relatively uncommon – this means the response or application is severely lacking in addressing the criteria/criterion.
  - Be sure to provide comments to substantiate the low score.
- Click to download a copy of the criteria for AOSI/II, APS

What do I need for Panel Day?
If you’re a panelist for a Regional Arts Partner of the Indiana Arts Commission, you will receive instructions directly from your program manager or regional director. This includes location, parking, arrival time, etc. You may need to bring a laptop.

What happens on Panel Day?
You will be asked to arrive at least 30 minutes before the public review meeting starts. When we say “public”, we mean the panel is open to the public. Applicants are invited to attend the public review session, which is recorded, however they are not allowed to interact with the panel. Panelists convene so that each application is thoroughly reviewed by the diverse perspectives that comprise the full panel.
Arrive about 30 minutes before the public meeting starts (e.g., if the public meeting is at 10:30am, you will be asked to arrive at 10am)

Public meetings are recorded and posted online or available upon request.

Applicants are encouraged to attend and observe, but cannot speak, lobby or offer clarification. Do not address the audience.

Remember to keep your comments constructive, respectful and to the criteria.

Staff is there to answer questions and provide application or policy clarification

Panel review works like this

1. A panel chair will facilitate the conversation and introduce each new application and reader.
2. The first reader will begin an application review by reporting their assessment and rationale.
3. The second reader offers any new or opposing perspectives.
4. Discussion opens to the full panel.
5. Scores are finalized.

Panel repeats the process until all applications have been reviewed and scored.

If a panelist has a conflict of interest, he or she will be excused from the room while the application is discussed. This panelist does not score the application.

Questions
Contact your Program Manager or...

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