



INDIANA ARTS  
COMMISSION

Indiana Arts Commission  
On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator  
Program Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2026 -2027

## Program Workshop Overview

**What is On-Ramp:** The On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator is a program designed for Indiana creative entrepreneurs to take charge of their career through a portfolio career. Participants explore a community-engaged approach to apply their creative strengths and build a sustainable practice based on business concepts.

**Who Can Apply:** While any artist or creative that meets the eligibility requirements may apply, early career or emerging artists who have generated enough work to articulate their own creative voice and practice will get the most out of this experience.

- Applicants must be an individual. Organizations may not apply.
- Must be 18 years or older
- Must be a US Citizen
- Must be an Indiana resident and remain a full time Indiana resident through the end of the fellowship period (September 1, 2027)
- May not have been a past On-Ramp participant
- Artist's primary discipline must be one of the eligible disciplines listed (see p.5)

### Key Dates:

#### Workshop

- Workshop Cohort Application Opens - Wednesday, January 14, 2026
- Workshop Cohort Application Deadline - February 18, 2026
- Three Day Workshop Course - May 12 – 15, 2026 in Indianapolis

#### Fellowship

- Application Deadline - June 5, 2026
- Fellowship Implementation Period - September 1, 2026 – September 1, 2027
- Final Report Deadline - September 8, 2027

**Who to Contact:** Jordan Adams, Artist Services Program Manager – [joadams1@iac.in.gov](mailto:joadams1@iac.in.gov)

## Program Details

### Program Goal

On-Ramp empowers creatives to work out a realistic, individualized, and motivating vision for pursuing a feasible creative portfolio career—and provides access to funds to help make it happen via an early action grant organized as a year-long fellowship.

The accelerator serves as the second program in the business development suite of programs offered to both emerging and early-career creative entrepreneurs. This accelerator will result in the following outcomes.

## **Program Outcomes**

- Meet needs assessed of artists including facilitating networks/connections, and providing marketing and financial support and education
- Indiana's arts providers have expanded opportunities to enhance the quality of life in their communities.§
- Indiana's artists build towards successful careers in our state.§

[§ IAC 2024 – 2028 Long-Term Strategic Framework Impact](#)

## **About Us**

The Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) is an agency of state government, and its funding comes from the Indiana General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

A core component to the Indiana Arts Commission's commitment to investing in the state's vibrant and rich arts and culture sector are grants, which support people and communities through arts organizations and arts projects.

## **Program Contacts**

This program is conducted by the Indiana Arts Commission and Minerva Financial Arts.

The following information outlines primary contacts for the grant program:

- **For questions about application, eligibility, and guidelines:** Contact the Jordan Adams, Artist Services Program Manager – [joadams1@iac.in.gov](mailto:joadams1@iac.in.gov)
- **For help or technical assistance with the Online Grant System:** Contact IAC grants and operations team at [grantsadmin@iac.in.gov](mailto:grantsadmin@iac.in.gov).
- **For accessibility accommodations or questions about accessibility at an organization or for a project:** Contact [accessibility@iac.in.gov](mailto:accessibility@iac.in.gov).
- **To apply:** [Access the application](#). Only applications submitted online will be accepted, except in the case of ADA accessibility accommodations.

## **Fellowship Award Amounts and Payment Process**

Artists can request up to \$2,000. Only artists selected to participate in the On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator workshop are eligible to apply for a fellowship.

***Your fellowship grant will be paid in two payments.*** All payments are contingent upon adherence to all fellowship guidelines and reporting requirements.

The first payment will be 75 percent of the total award (\$1500). Funds will be transferred via direct deposit to your bank account after the fellowship agreement and required documents have been approved.

The second payment will be for the remaining 25 percent (\$500) and will be paid after the final grant report and any additional requirements have been submitted and approved.

This award is intended to serve as a reimbursement grant.

### **Cohort Selection Priorities**

Applications will be reviewed and recommended by a selection committee of creative business and art peers and professionals, as well as IAC staff. Up to 20 individual artists will be selected to participate in the cohort.

Applicants that are the best fit for On-Ramp include creatives that:

- show commitment to their creative work based on artistic training, artistic experience, and artistic work sample relevant to their discipline.
- are actively working in their creative practice. They have a long-term goal that shows commitment to their creative work. They are confident, excited, and aspirational.
- are actively connecting their work with others or thoughtfully considering possible ways their work may connect with others. Their expectations for On-Ramp demonstrate an open-mindedness for learning and moving their artist/creative business career forward in multiple operational areas.

Further, the selection committee will use these priorities to create a cohort that has:

- Variety of artistic career experience
- Statewide representation
- Variety of creative disciplines

### **Dates to Know – On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Cohort Application (Workshop May 12-15, 2026)**

Milestone	Date
Workshop Cohort Application Opens	Wednesday, January 14, 2026
Informational Webinar	January 21, 2026 at 6:00 PM ET ( <a href="#">Register to attend the informational webinar</a> )
Workshop Cohort Application Deadline	February 18, 2026, by 4:30 PM ET* <i>*Late applications are not accepted. All applications are final following the submission deadline.</i>
Workshop Cohort Selection Notification	Week of March 23, 2026

Workshop Cohort Invitation Acceptance Deadline	Thursday, April 9, 2026, by 4:30 PM ET
Three Day Workshop Course in Indianapolis	Check-In and Kick Off Social – May 12, 2026 Course Day 1 – May 13, 2026 Course Day 2 – May 14, 2026 Course Day 3 – May 15, 2026

**Dates to Know - Fellowship Application (Fellowship Period September 1, 2026 – September 1, 2027)\***

Milestone	Date
Fellowship Application Opens	Wednesday, May 20, 2026
Fellowship Application Deadline	Friday, June 5, 2026, by 4:30 p.m. ET
Fellowship Application Staff Review Request Deadline	Friday, May 29, 2026, by 4:30 p.m. ET
Live Application Panels	June 24-25, 2026
Fellowship Funding Notification	Week of July 13, 2026
Fellowship Implementation Period	September 1, 2026 – September 1, 2027
Final Grant Report	September 8, 2027, by 4:30 p.m. ET

\* After the creative entrepreneur course, three-day workshop, participating creatives can apply for a year-long fellowship that offers a \$2,000 early action grant to place the lessons taught into immediate action.

The subsequent fellowship project application will open one week after the start of the course workshop.

## Eligibility

### Eligible Applicants\*

While any artist or creative that meets the eligibility requirements may apply, early career or emerging artists who have generated enough work to articulate their own creative voice and practice will get the most out of this experience.

- Applicants must be an individual. Organizations may not apply.
- Must be 18 years or older
- Must be a US Citizen
- Must be an Indiana resident and remain a full time Indiana resident through the end of the fellowship period (September 1, 2027)
- May not have been a past On-Ramp participant
- Artists' primary discipline must be one of the following:
  - Dance
  - Music
  - Opera/Music Theatre

- Theatre
- Visual Arts
- Design Arts, including architecture, fashion, graphic, industrial, interior, landscape architecture, and urban/metropolitan
- Crafts – including clay, fiber, glass, leather, metal, paper, plastic, wood and mixed media
- Photography
- Media Arts – including film, audio, video, and work created using technology or experimental digital media
- Literature
- Interdisciplinary – art forms that integrate more than one arts discipline listed above to form a single work
- Folklife/Traditional Arts – oral, customary, material and performance traditions informally learned and transmitted in contexts characteristic of ethnic, religious, linguistic, occupational, and/or regional groups. Does not include folk-inspired forms.

## Use of Fellowship Funds

### Eligible Expenses

On-Ramp grants support eligible project expenses pertaining to advancing career development based on workshop content. Some expenses could include;

- supplies
- equipment rental
- equipment purchase\*
- facility rental
- marketing/publicity/promotion
- travel/transport within the United States
- personnel
- administration\*\*
- support for artistic residency and workshops/training
- other expenses that further career development

The IAC reserves the right to make final determination of expense eligibility.

*\*No more than 50% of IAC funds may be applied to capital equipment such as musical instruments, audio equipment or tools.*

*\*\*No more than 25% of IAC grant funds may be applied to administrative overhead.*

### Ineligible Uses of IAC Funds

Funds cannot be used for expenses unrelated to the project, operating support for an organization, travel or expenses outside the United States, tuition for a degree-granting

program, debt reduction or debt elimination (like interest payments on credit cards), or income taxes.

IAC funds may not be used on food and beverage (including alcoholic beverages); cash awards or prizes (including gift cards); and fundraising costs and events. **This is not an exhaustive list of ineligible expenses.** [\*\*Consult Requirements and Policies for Indiana Arts Commission Grantees for additional information on eligible and ineligible uses of IAC funds.\*\*](#)

Contact the program manager with any questions concerning eligible and ineligible project expenses.

## **Evaluation Criteria and Review Process**

*Cohort applications will be evaluated by how well they meet the following criteria:*

### **Cohort Selection**

- **Artistic Commitment and Readiness** – The extent to which the artist shows commitment to their creative work based on artistic training, artistic experience and artistic work samples relevant to their discipline.
- **Career Benefit and Goals** – The extent to which the artist demonstrates career benefit from participation in On-Ramp and articulates a long term goal(s) that demonstrates a commitment to career growth.
- **Community Benefit** – The extent to which the artist is actively connecting their work with others or thoughtfully considering possible ways their work may connect with others.

*Fellowship applications will be evaluated by how well they meet the following criteria:*

### **Fellowship Award**

- **Goals** – The project proposal describes and showcases the artist's creative work in a clear and compelling way. The project proposal has a clear goal that will help reach the artist's bigger picture creative career or creative business goals.
- **Feasibility** - The project timeline is realistic. It starts and ends within the fellowship period. The details of the project are planned and can be executed clearly. The project budget is realistic, includes all the costs involved, and all expenses are eligible.
- **Community Engagement** - Community engagement is utilized intentionally in the project proposal. The project proposal articulates how investing in particular community relationships will help the artist reach their career goals or the project come to fruition.

[Access the Evaluation Criteria.](#)

[Access the scoring rubric that will be used in the cohort selection review.](#)

[Access the scoring rubric that will be used in the fellowship application review.](#)

After all cohort and fellowship applications are reviewed, IAC staff will establish a minimum score for selection and funding eligibility.

## **Draft Review – Fellowship Applications Only**

Draft review is available to fellowship applications only. Fellowship application draft reviews are available before live application panels. Draft reviews consist of general feedback and suggestions around application completeness and clarity. To request a draft review, notify your program manager by Friday, May 29, 2026, by 4:30 PM ET. Your project manager will review your still in-draft application. Do not submit your application if you'd like a draft review – leave it in draft for the review.

Draft Review Deadline: Friday, May 29, 2026, by 4:30 p.m. ET

## **Final Eligibility Review**

Post application deadline, applications receive an eligibility review to ensure the applicant is eligible to apply for the program and all required information was submitted. Incomplete or missing information may deem the application ineligible to advance to the review process.

## **Application Review**

Arts and cultural professionals, educators, artists, and other community members review and evaluate both the cohort and fellowship applications by how well each application satisfies the program's evaluation criteria. Later, IAC staff use reviewer scores and other factors such as geographic location in the determination of cohort selection and fellowship award funding recommendations.

**The review process is highly competitive, and not all applications are selected to participate in the cohort.**

## **Grant Recipient Requirements**

### **Final Report Requirements**

Artists who receive a fellowship award are required to report on their activity(s) at the end of the fellowship implementation period. It includes both quantitative data (like the number of people involved) and narrative questions (like what you've learned).

Artists are expected to submit a final grant report no later than September 8, 2027, 4:30 PM ET (or earlier, if you complete your project before then). The report is an online form.

Collected information is shared with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to determine trends and funding impact. Grantees should be engaged in participant tracking during the activity(s).

Final grant reports submitted after the due date may be subject to penalty. Read the [Not in Good Standing policy](#).

### **Project Modification**

After you start your project, you may realize that your plan wasn't perfect or that life happens, and you need to change your plan to make the project work. If this occurs, call your fellowship manager as soon as possible. You are under contract to complete your approved proposal, so

you will need to get approval from your fellowship manager and fill out some paperwork before you make changes.

### **Additional Requirements**

IAC grants come with additional requirements such as acknowledgement of public funding.

[Consult Requirements and Policies for Indiana Arts Commission Grantees for additional information.](#)

### **To Apply**

Access the application at <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=indianaarts>

Workshop Cohort Application Submission Deadline: February 18, 2026 by 4:30p.m. ET