



CULTURAL LEADERSHIP PARTNERS PROGRAM GUIDELINES



BACKGROUND

The Cultural Leadership Partners program provides arts and cultural organizations that demonstrate an exemplary record of cultural and managerial excellence and community service with a designation and flexible financial support over a three-year period.

Organizations selected for the program must demonstrate:

- Excellence in programming, leadership and cultural impact on a continuing basis to the citizens of Iowa
- Sound fiscal and managerial practices
- Deliberate community outreach and involvement

Funding for the program is made possible by an annual appropriation from the Iowa Legislature to the Iowa Arts Council, which exists within the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), and by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Applicants must adhere to the IEDA's and Iowa Arts Council's operating and granting policies and procedures set forth in [Iowa Administrative Code](#) and to federal requirements, including but not limited to [2 CFR Part 200](#).

QUESTIONS

Potential applicants, especially first-time applicants, are encouraged to review all published material and contact Jennie Knoebel, senior grants and program manager, at jennie.knoebel@iowaeda.com or 515.348.6324 with questions well in advance of application deadlines.

ACCESSIBILITY

IEDA is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to eligible applicants. For technical support submitting the online application, please contact Jennie Knoebel at jennie.knoebel@iowaeda.com or 515.348.6324 at least two weeks in advance of the application deadline.

TIMELINE

February 15, 2024 | Fiscal Year 2025 Intent to Apply Form Deadline

The deadline to submit an Intent to Apply Form is 11:59 p.m. on February 15, 2024. Applicants will be notified by February 23, 2024, if they are eligible to submit a full application.

April 1, 2024 | Fiscal Year 2025 Application Deadline

The deadline to submit an online application is 11:59 p.m. on April 1, 2024, for the funding period July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027.

April 2024 | Designation and Funding Decision Notification

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

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027 | Designation and Funding Period

The three-year designation period will be in effect from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027. Funding will be awarded on an annual basis for eligible expenses incurred within the eligible funding period of July 1 – June 30.

August 1, 2025, 2026, 2027 | Annual Report Deadlines

Annual funding disbursement is contingent upon completion of annual reports, in form and content to be specified by IEDA, to confirm continued eligibility in the program. The reports will be due on August 1 of 2025, 2026 and 2027.

Site Visit

IEDA will conduct at least one site visit over the course of the three-year designation period.

FUNDING

Grant Amounts

Organizations awarded funding will receive a Cultural Leadership Partner award that corresponds to the organization’s cash operating expenses, taken as an average of the organization’s last two fiscal years (2022 and 2023).

Organizational Cash Operating Expenses	Award per Year
\$150,000 – \$499,999	\$10,000
\$500,000 – \$999,999	\$15,000
\$1,000,000 and up	\$20,000

Matching Funds Requirement

An applicant shall be required to demonstrate evidence of ability to match the requested amount in cash. Eligible organizations whose cash operating expenses, excluding state and federal funds, are equal to or more than the grant award shall be determined to have met the matching requirements for this program. Grant funds from IEDA or federal funds shall not be used as matching funds for this program.

Funding Period

Funding is disbursed to grant recipients on an annual basis contingent upon completion and acceptance of annual reports confirming continued eligibility for the program. Grant funds must be expended within the eligible funding period of July 1 – June 30 over the duration of the three-year period of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027.

DESIGNATION BENEFITS

Cultural Leadership Partners may engage in peer learning, networking and mentorship opportunities during the funding period.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must demonstrate that they have met the following eligibility requirements for the applicant’s three consecutive operating years immediately prior to the application deadline and agree to meet them in the current year and in each year of the funding period.

Eligible Applicants

Organizational Eligibility

- Identify as either an arts or cultural organization.
 - Arts organizations are defined as organizations whose primary mission and purpose is focused on the [arts](#).
 - Cultural organizations are defined as organizations whose primary mission and purpose is [cultural or humanities](#) focused or meets the definition of the [interpretive sciences](#).
- Nonprofit organization incorporated and physically located in Iowa exempt from federal taxes pursuant to US Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).
- Actively registered with the [Iowa Secretary of State](#) to do business in the State of Iowa.
- An arts or cultural department or division of a municipal government that is also incorporated in Iowa under the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act.
- Libraries, parks or recreation departments are NOT eligible.
- Entities located in a border community may be eligible if they are incorporated in Iowa, federally tax-exempt, and can demonstrate that 51% or more of individuals benefiting from their programs and services are Iowans.

Overall Operational Standards

- Organization must operate and provide arts and cultural programming year-round. Year-round means the 12-month period during which an organization's primary arts and cultural activities, programs or services are provided to the citizens of Iowa.
- Organization must demonstrate at least 50% of the individuals benefiting from an applicant's programs and services are residents of Iowa.
- Organization must maintain a cash operating expense budget, exclusive of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Iowa Arts Council general operating support, of no less than \$150,000 per year.
- Organization must have at least one paid, full-time, professional employee who is employed year-round and is responsible for managing the organization.
 - Professional employee is defined as an executive director or other similar senior management position that is responsible for leading and executing the organization's mission and vision. Professional employee does not mean a member of the board of directors or an office manager.

Accessibility – Americans with Disabilities Act

Organization must demonstrate that it 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.

Strategic Plan

Organization must have a current strategic plan in place approved by its board of trustees or other form of governing body. A strategic plan means a document developed and used by an organization to align its organization and budget structure with organizational priorities, mission, goals, and objectives.

Universal Entity Identifier (SAM-UEI)

Entities applying for IEDA programs must be registered with the U.S. Government's System for Award Management (SAM), at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). Entities that register in SAM.gov are assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), which is required for doing business with the federal government. All applicants for IEDA programs except for individual applicants are required to have a UEI and maintain an active SAM.gov registration for the duration of the application process and, if awarded a grant, for the life of the award.

Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants include the following types of entities:

- Organization that uses a fiscal agent or the nonprofit or federal tax-exempt status of another organization.
- For-profit corporation or business; religious organization; political party; or national service/professional organization.
- Agency, department or division of county, state, or federal government, including libraries, parks and recreation, and arts and cultural offices that exist as an agency, department or division of county, state or federal government.
- Auditorium, arena, convention center or similar type of venue whose primary purpose is related to presenting popular entertainment, sporting or recreational events.
- Educational institution, organization or K-12 school whose primary orientation, mission and purposes are education and/or awarding academic credits.
- Organization that has not met organizational eligibility requirements.

BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds may be used to support operating and programmatic expenses incurred within the eligible funding period. Funds may be used to fulfill the mission at the discretion of the grant recipient but must support strategic goals as outlined by the organization and its leadership.

All costs included in the approved grant budget or reported on payment requests and financial reports for the award must be:

- Necessary and reasonable for the performance of the grant award.
- Allocable and in conformance with the cost principles and as set forth in the award.
- Consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally financed activities and other activities of the non-federal entity.
- Accorded consistent treatment as a direct cost.
- Determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).
- Not included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other state or federally financed program.
- Adequately documented for reporting and audit purposes.
- Incurred during the approved period of performance during which funds are budgeted.

Ineligible Grant Request Expenses

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

Ineligible grant request expenses include:

- Acquisition/purchase of artwork
- 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
- Commercial (for-profit) enterprises or activities, including concessions, food, t-shirts, artwork or other items for resale (this includes online or virtual sales/shops)
- Costs for the creation of new organizations
- Deficit or debt reduction
- Donations or contributions to other organizations
- Expenses incurred prior to or after the funding period
- Food, beverage and alcohol
- Foreign travel
- Funding cash reserve or endowment accounts or instruments
- Fundraising or benefit activity expenses
- General miscellaneous or contingency costs
- Home studio/office costs or expenses, including utilities and mortgage payments
- Lobbying activity
- Personnel benefits
- Prizes and awards
- Project costs supported by any other federal or state funding
- Property maintenance, restoration or renovation expenses
- Purchase and/or use of gift cards and gift certificates to support project costs
- Purchase of a vehicle
- Social activities such as receptions, parties, galas, community dinners, picnics and potlucks
- Tuition, fees or project activity that results in an applicant's undergraduate or graduate course credit, degree or certification
- Unallowable expenses for federal awards as defined in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles
- Unrealized ticket or event revenue (providing free tickets or scholarships to attend an event)

REVIEW PROCESS

Eligibility Review

IEDA staff will review submitted forms of intent to determine if the applicant is eligible to submit a full application. Applicants deemed eligible will be invited to submit a full application.

Submitted applications are reviewed by staff for completion, eligibility and adherence to published guidelines. Applications are reviewed as submitted, provided that 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, IEDA or 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. Determinations as to eligibility or completeness are final agency action pursuant to the Iowa Administrative Procedure Act, Iowa Code Chapter 17A.

Competitive Panel Review

Eligible applications will be referred for a competitive review by a panel of professionals with expertise related to the purpose of the grant program. Applications will be scored and ranked based on the published scoring rubric. Recommendations are submitted to the IEDA Director for consideration and funding approval.

Decision Notification

Applicants are typically notified of funding decisions, including decisions to decline to fund applications, within four 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 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. 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.

Intent to Apply Form Questions

Applications will not be considered for funding if the applicant fails to submit an intent to apply form by 11:59 p.m. on February 15, 2024. Forms will be reviewed to determine eligibility and eligible applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

APPLICATION

Application Questions & Scoring Rubric

The Cultural Leadership Partners program scoring rubric will be used by the 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 a fair review process. The rubric is on a scale of 60 points.

Programs and Services

Include the organization's official mission statement. Provide a brief overview of the organization and the programs and services the organization offers, including:

- How they advance the organization and help to accomplish the stated mission.
- How they uphold the organization's values.

Programs and Services: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant offers exceptional programming or services that clearly advance its vision and reflect its mission and values.	Applicant offers average programming or services that relate to its mission and values.	Applicant's programming or services are limited and/or it is unclear how they relate to the mission and values.

Community Engagement

Describe the organization's involvement within their community, including:

- Detailed description of the community in which the organization is located and who the organization currently serves. Be specific, including overall demographics such as geographic boundaries; race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status of people served; and number of people the organization serves each year (e.g. patrons, visitors, students).
- Highlighting current programmatic and community engagement activities that demonstrate how the organization proactively reaches out and involves community members in the planning, design, and implementation of programs.

Community Engagement: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant demonstrates a record of community outreach and engagement activities that are connected to the mission. Applicant proactively engages their community in planning, design and implementation of programs.	Applicant demonstrates sporadic community outreach and engagement efforts and/or limited programmatic activities that reflect and include the broader community.	Applicant demonstrates weak or little community engagement. The applicant does not actively engage their community in planning, design and implementation of programs.

Statewide Impact

Describe the impact the organization has across Iowa, including:

- Detailed description on how the organization proactively engages with and supports peer organizations throughout the state.
- Current efforts by the organization to increase tourism from out of state visitors and/or involve them more directly in the organization.

Statewide Impact: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant demonstrates a record of proactively engaging with and supporting organizations throughout the state. Organization has significant efforts in place to	Applicant demonstrates sporadic outreach and engagement efforts to support peer organizations throughout the state and/or encourage out of state visitors.	Engagement statewide and outreach to increase tourism from out of state is unclear.

increase participation from out of the state.		
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Organization Leadership

Upload one page with the names, titles/positions and biographies of the organization’s leadership and key staff. Upload Board of Directors’ list (if applicable) noting each member’s affiliations.

Organization Leadership: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Organization leadership at the staff and board level is exceptional based on relevant experience described in their bio and list of board members.	Organization leadership at the staff and board level is adequate based on relevant experience described in their bio and list of board members.	Organization leadership at staff and board level is inadequate based on relevant experience described in their bio and list of board members.

Strategic Plan Development and Implementation

Cultural Leadership Partners are required to have a current strategic plan. Upload the organization’s plan. Describe how the strategic plan submitted with your application was developed and how it is implemented on a regular basis.

Strategic Plan Development and Implementation: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Organization provides a clear process for creating the strategic plan that involves staff and board members as well as input from other organizational stakeholders. Applicant has a clear plan to implement the strategic plan.	Organization provides a process for creating the strategic plan. A process for implementation of the plan is outlined but may not happen on a regular basis.	Organization’s process for creating the strategic plan is not identified or unclear. A process to implement the plan is not identified or unclear.

Organization Financial Overview

Upload the most recently filed Internal Revenue Service Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax (Form 990). If you are unable to upload the entire document, submit the breakdown of income and expenses and program activities. Upload the organization’s current balance sheet.

- Balance Sheet Overview – Based on submitted balance sheet, provide the following information:
 - Total current assets
 - Total current liabilities
 - Cash and cash equivalents
 - Total assets
 - Total liabilities
- Financial Snapshot – These numbers will be entered for the organization’s most recently completed three consecutive fiscal years. Information required for each fiscal year includes:
 - Revenue

- Expenses
- Net
- Financial Narrative – Describe any anomalies that appear in the organization’s financials that may be relevant in evaluating the organization’s overall financial health.

The Iowa Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence has established the following guidelines regarding financial audits:

- Total gross revenues of \$1,000,000+: Independent Audit (an accountant that does not serve on the organization’s board)
- Total gross revenues between \$250,000 and \$1,000,000: Review by independent accountant (an accountant that does not serve on the organization’s board)
- Total gross revenues below \$250,000: No review or audit necessary, outside review encouraged

Select which of the following the organization conducts:

- Independent Audit
- Independent Review
- No Independent Review or Audit

Organization Financial Overview: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Financial overview is clear, complete and supported by strong financial documents. Conducts an appropriate audit or annual review based on their budget size. No concerns about the organization’s financial health.	Financial overview is provided. Organization does not conduct an appropriate audit or annual review for their budget size. Some concerns about the organization’s financial health.	Financial overview is unclear or incomplete. Concerns about the organization's financial health.

Organization’s Future Health

Describe the primary issue(s) or challenge(s) facing the organization in the next three years and how your organization plans to address it/them.

Organization’s Future Health: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Confident the organization has the financial and personnel resources and tools in place to address the outlined issue. Policies and procedures identified indicate a sustainable organization that will survive long into the future.	Organization has the financial and personnel resources and tools in place to adequately address the outlined issue. Policies and procedures identified indicate a stable organization that currently seems strong. Long term sustainability is unclear.	Concern that the organization does not have the necessary financial and personnel resources and tools in place to address the outlined issue. Policies and procedures identified indicate an unstable organization.

Outcomes and Evaluation

State at least one distinct and measurable outcome that the applicant intends to achieve with the first year of grant funding. A second outcome is optional. Effective outcomes are specific, measurable and can be reasonably achieved by the proposed activities. Avoid outcomes focused on numbers like “The Applicant will provide 10 art classes to 100 students.” Instead, focus on how the grant funding will result in helping the organization to achieve one of their strategic goals. Describe how you will monitor and evaluate progress toward the outcome. Examples of evaluation activities include, but is not limited to, surveys of program participants, measuring attendance and third-party program evaluations. If applicable, include plans to share learnings and outcomes.

In addition, select one Iowa Arts Council strategic goal that best aligns with the applicant’s stated outcome(s):

- Build the capacity and resilience of arts organizations, especially as it relates to addressing challenges around operating models and leadership, financial sustainability and audience development.
- Ensure that Iowa K-12 students have access to meaningful arts learning opportunities and career and learning pathways in the arts.
- Foster arts programming that seeks to advance individual and community health and well-being.
- Invest in creative projects that enhance the cultural identity of communities and districts.
- Nurture and support cross-sector partnerships that include the arts and artists as a core partner to address community needs.
- Promote access to the arts by addressing barriers to participation, ensuring diverse community representation in programming and increasing accessibility for those with disabilities.

Outcomes and Evaluation: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Applicant has clearly identified an outcome that is specific, measurable and can be achieved by the proposed activities and connects to their strategic plan. The applicant has clear methods in place to collect necessary data to analyze achievement of project outcome.	Applicant has identified an outcome that is measurable and is likely to be achieved by the proposed activities and somewhat connects to their strategic plan. Evaluation methods and measures are satisfactory and may help the applicant to collect the necessary data to determine if the outcome was achieved.	Outcome is unclear and/or the identified outcome is not connected to the applicant’s strategic plan. Evaluation methods and measures are inadequate.

Budget Form

Grant Request Amount

Enter the total amount of grant funding being requested to support the project based on the organization’s annual cash operating expenses outlined in the guidelines. Round to the nearest dollar. Do not include dollar signs, decimals, or commas.

Grant Request Expenses

Itemize the expenses the grant request will cover for the first year including a brief description of the expense and the numeric dollar amount associated with the expense in the budget form below. The sum of these expenses should equal the Total Grant Request listed above.

Budget: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Budget and intended use of requested funds are clear, appropriate and will help the applicant to achieve intended outcome.	Budget and the intended use of requested funds are identified. It is unclear if they will help the applicant to achieve the intended outcome.	Budget and the intended use of requested funds are unclear or inadequate.

Support Material

Submit three to five media samples that provide additional context for organizational excellence. Media samples may include promotional material, work samples, letters of support or other material that enhances the case for support. Do not submit additional narrative or lists of web links. The title must identify the media support material.

Support Material: 5 points possible		
5	3	1
Support material is highly relevant to the application and demonstrates organizational excellence.	Support material relates to the application and is of average quality.	Support material is not relevant to the application and/or is of poor quality.

Case for Support

Panel will score the application overall on how well the applicant made a case for State investment.

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.

GLOSSARY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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