Artist Growth and Development Grant Program

Program Overview and Application Instructions

NDCA Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026)

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Artist Growth and Development Grant Program

The Artist Growth and Development grant program is designed to support practicing individual artists or collaborating artists residing in North Dakota. Two grants of $5,000 are awarded annually to artists for the creation of new artwork in the form of a year-long project or series that will enhance or expand their artistic skills.

Eligible Disciplines for FY26: Literature (Creative Writing) and Music

Program Deadlines

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE	Earliest Project Start Date	Latest Project End Date	Final Report Due Date
Tuesday, April 1, 2025, 4:30 p.m. CST	July 1, 2025	June 30, 2026	June 30, 2026

Incomplete or late applications are not accepted.

Program Officer

Lisa McCallum | Email: lmccallum@nd.gov | Phone: (701) 328-7615

Contact the program officer for application support or questions.
Alternate application formats available upon request.

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Each proposal must include one (1) community component (such as a public performance, exhibition, reading, open workshop, or demonstration). NDCA encourages more community events if possible. Community events provide visibility for the artist's work and promote meaningful engagement with audiences in North Dakota's varied communities.

Eligibility

Eligible Artist Applicants Must:
- Be pursuing original artwork on an ongoing basis within an artistic discipline
- Be the originator of the work, not an interpreter of the work of others
- Be a United States citizen or have attained permanent resident status
- Be 18 years of age or older on the application's due date
- Be a North Dakota resident as of January 1, 2025, and continue to reside in North Dakota throughout the contract period of the grant
- Not be enrolled as a full-time or part-time student in any high school, college, or university at the time of application

This Program Funds:

- Practicing artists who see the arts as an ongoing vocation, rather than as a hobby, pastime, or occasional pursuit
- Artists who have a record of generating and publicly presenting and exhibiting or who have published work in the disciplines for FY26 (Literature or Music) and will continue to do so
- Artists whose primary goal is to generate new works in the form of a project or series during the contract period of the grant

Grant Schedule and Eligible Disciplines

This program serves six (6) disciplines that have rotating deadlines every three (3) years. It includes **traditional arts** that historically have developed informally or been passed on generationally and depict an ethnic or geographical art form.

This application includes:
Literature (Creative Writing): Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, Poetry
Music: Composers, Sound Artists

For projects taking place between July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Ineligible Expenses:
- Projects completed in previous fiscal years
- Payment of project costs incurred before the project start date
- Fundraising events and activities
- Prizes, awards, or benefits
- Entertainment functions, including food, beverages, alcohol, and associated costs
- Sales inventory and related fees/taxes
- Projects that are part of a required course or curriculum
- Travel and projects that take place outside the geographic boundaries of North Dakota
- Projects that are not open to the general public
- Projects involving the arts as therapy unless artists are employed as art therapists
- Self-publishing costs may only be included as a small portion of the expenses

Ineligible Activities:
- Projects that violate any federal, state, or local laws, ordinances, or policies
- Projects that support activities that are essentially for the religious socialization of the participants or audience or discriminate against people or groups
- Projects that attempt to influence any state or federal legislation or appropriation
- Projects that are managed by another entity other than the applicant
- Projects and artwork that are created using Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Ineligible Applications:
- Application is not complete and received by 4:30 p.m. CST on the application deadline

Ineligible Applicants:
- Applicant is a grantee of the Artist Growth and Development (formerly the Individual Artist Fellowship) grant program within the last ten (10) years, since fiscal year 2016
- Applicant is not in compliance with any active grant agreement with NDCA

Grant Award Amount

Maximum Award Request: $5,000
No matching funds are required for this program.
Grants to individuals are taxable income.

Application Review Process

1) After Submission: Applications are reviewed by staff for eligibility and completeness.

2) Panels: Panelists are selected annually. For more information, visit: arts.nd.gov/get-involved/become-panelist. Online meetings are open to the public. Anyone may attend and listen to the discussion but may not present or participate. See arts.nd.gov/news/ndca-meetings for dates.

3) Review Criteria: The panel evaluates each application and makes funding recommendations to NDCA's Board based on how well the applicant addresses the four (4) review criteria. Panelists individually score complete applications. Those scores are averaged to arrive at the final score.

4) Panel Score: To be recommended for an award, an applicant must receive an average total score of 60 or more out of 100.

5) Board Approval: NDCA's Board of Directors has final authority to approve grants.

Review Criteria

1) Quality (0-30 points)
- Quality of the applicant's work as evidenced by work samples submitted

2) Professional Achievement (0-15 points)
- Professional achievement and record of arts activity as shown on the artist's resume and in the Artist Biography

3) Merit and Feasibility of Artist Project Proposal (0-35 points)
The applicant's plan and budget demonstrate:
- Project is specific in promoting artistic and/or professional growth
- Current artistic skills and strengths are enhanced and expanded
- Project is achievable and appropriate
- Actions are logical, detailed, and will lead to a successful outcome(s)
- Budget is appropriate and matches described actions and outcome(s)

4) Potential Impact (0-20 points)
Potential impact of the grant on the artistic future of the artist. The community component and statements about the applicant's impact is demonstrated by:
- One or more community components, appropriate to the applicant and project
- Specific audiences and communities for the events are clearly defined
- Adequate funds are budgeted for these events

If Funded

> **Notification**
> - Communication regarding the grant award is via email (administrator@grantinterface.com).
>
> **Payment**
> - **Disbursement Amounts and Timing of Funds:** Awarded funds are paid in full within the month of August 2025.
> - **Return of Funds:** Grantees are required to spend the entirety of the NDCA grant award. The final report must show expenses at or greater than the budgeted amount or funds will need to be returned.

Reporting
- **Change Reports:** Any project changes to the activities, timeline, or budget need to be approved in writing by the program officer. Note that not all project changes can be approved.
- **Final Reports:** An online final report is due by June 30, 2026. Overdue final reports will affect future eligibility to apply for and/or receive NDCA funding.

Recognition
- Grantees are required to acknowledge NDCA support by using the **NDCA logo and credit line** on all promotional materials of the funded activity.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

How to Apply

Grant applications are submitted online through the NDCA online grant system.

1. To apply, go to grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=ndca
2. Register or log into account.
3. Click "Apply" at the top navigation of the website.
4. Click the "Apply" button next to "Artist Growth and Development FY26 Application."

Application Support

First-time applicants are encouraged to contact the program officer if they have questions while preparing the application. The program officer can assist with eligibility questions and project idea development and goals.

Online Application Tips

- You can type responses to application questions into text boxes or you can work in another document and paste the answers in. The online grant system automatically saves your work. There is also a "Save Application" button at the bottom of the application form.
- Rich text formatting is limited in narrative questions. You may use bullets, numbers, bolding, italicizing, and underlining. Text boxes with character length limits include letters, numbers, spaces, and paragraph breaks.
- Confirmation emails are sent automatically after the application is successfully submitted. If you do not receive a confirmation email (administrator@grantinterface.com), contact the program officer.

Application Requirements

1. Applicant Information
2. Narrative
3. Budget
4. Work Samples

Applicant Information

Artist Statement (*Required)* (1,500 maximum characters)
An artistic statement describes your personal artistic voice and vision, where are you now in your career as an artist, who and what influences you, and what you want to achieve in your career in the arts.
- Provide a statement that focuses on your career in the arts and includes information about your work and artistic practice.

Artist Resume (*Required)* (2-page maximum, upload a PDF)
In this section, provide a resume that illustrates evidence of strong career commitment, relevant formal or informal educational background, training, mentorship, apprenticeship, experience as an artist, artistic recognition, and/or awards.

NEA Questions (*Required)*
NDCA collects this information for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Narrative

Proposals will be evaluated based on how the applicant addresses the four (4) review criteria, with total possible points of 20, or 100%.

Project Title *(Required)* (75 maximum characters)
Provide a short title describing the project.

Brief Project Description (250 maximum characters)
Provide a brief (1-2 sentences) description for the project.

Project Start Date *(Required*) The earliest date that can be entered is 7/1/2025.

Project End Date *(Required)* The latest date that can be entered is 6/30/2026.

1) Artist Biography *(Required)* (2,000 maximum characters)
1. Describe your background and accomplishments as an artist.
2. (Optional) If you are working in the **traditional arts**, describe your learning process and mentors or teachers.

2) Project Proposal (*Required)* (2,500 maximum characters)
1. Discuss the new project or series that you will create during the grant period.
2. How does this project explore your personal artistic voice and vision?

3) Project Outcomes (*Required)* (2,000 maximum characters)
1. Explain why this grant is important at this time in your career. Describe why this project is the appropriate next step on your path and how you expect the grant to impact your artistic career.
2. If the project you are proposing will be similar in nature and scope to past work, what about this project will provide growth and a new challenge for you?

4) Feasibility of the Artist Plan (*Required)* (2,000 maximum characters)
1. Provide a reasonable timeline that lays out individual steps of the year-long project.
2. Why is this time frame feasible and reasonable for what you are proposing?
3. If collaborators will be involved with the project, name them and describe what they bring to the project.
   (Note that the budget is taken into consideration while determining the overall feasibility of the project plan. Everything discussed in the project plan must be demonstrated in the budget.)

5) Impact on the State and Communities (*Required)* (2,000 maximum characters)
   Community Component
   Each proposal must include one (1) community component (such as a public performance, exhibition, reading, open workshop, or demonstration). NDCA encourages more community events if possible.
   1. Describe the community component(s) of the project**.** Provide information about venues that you have contacted regarding the community event(s) for this project.
   2. Why have you selected the location(s)? How will the venue(s) help you reach new audiences?

6) Audience Community Component (*Required)* (1,500 maximum characters)
1. How is this project relevant to the community(ies) you have identified for your project?
2. Describe how this project will provide North Dakotans with arts experiences that might not currently be available to them.

Budget Form and Instructions

Download the budget form here:
https://www.arts.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/grants/AGDFY26Budgetandinstructions.pdf. Complete and upload to the online application. Provide a thorough budget that clearly supports the actions that have been described in the narrative.
Self-publishing costs may only be included as a small portion of the expenses.

Work Samples

Work samples are required to evaluate the artistic quality of the applicant's artwork. Applicants who do not submit **complete** work samples will not be reviewed. A complete work sample includes:
1) images, video, audio, and/or written work
2) a description for each sample

- Work samples **must be completed within the three (3) years prior** to the application deadline (April 2023 or newer).
- Work samples cannot be commercial work.
- Applicants may submit collaborative work as a work sample only if the applicant's role as a collaborator in the creation of the work is clearly defined.
- Work samples with voiceovers or additional text that aim to describe the work or provide additional information are not accepted. Promotional or marketing documentation is not appropriate and will not be reviewed.

Work Sample Tips: A strong work sample accomplishes the following:
- Illustrates an artistic voice and technical skill.
- Provides evidence of the artistic quality of the artist's work.
- Documents the artwork itself, not the quality of teaching or the experience of a demonstration.
- Supports the stated intentions of the proposed project.

Notes about Rights
- The works and the rights to those works resulting from NDCA grants are the sole property of the artist(s).
- Copyright registration is the sole responsibility of the applicant.
- All work samples submitted are public information and will not be returned. NDCA may use samples in promotional materials.

Work Sample Guidelines

- Fiction and Creative Nonfiction: Submit a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of four (4) samples of creative writing that total up to twelve (12) pages.
- Poetry: Submit a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of six (6) samples of creative writing that total up to twelve (12) pages.
- Music: Submit a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of four (4) samples of audio or video samples for a total time of up to eight (8) minutes.
  More information on Work Sample Guidelines and the description required for each is available in the online application.

Video
Provide a **URL link.**
- Video files must be uploaded to youtube.com or vimeo.com/
- Include only the material intended for panel review
- Include a Vimeo password, if applicable
- No video slideshow of images or promotional videos

Audio
Provide a **URL link.**
- Audio files must be uploaded to soundcloud.com or dropbox.com
- Include only the material intended for panel review
- Include a Soundcloud password, if applicable

> **Online Samples:** Keep video and audio samples available online until notified of grant award status.

Written Work
Provide a **PDF** file.
- Include only the material intended for panel review
- Remove title pages, table of contents, etc.
- Prose: double-spaced
- Poetry: single-spaced

If you do not want your video(s) to be public, see guidelines below on how to make them private and available for panel viewing.

- In YouTube, set the video sample to "Unlisted" (not the "Private" setting listed). This allows anyone with the link to view the video without a Google account and it is not public for viewing.
- In Vimeo, when uploading a video, select "Only people with a password can see this video."
- For YouTube support, visit support.google.com/youtube.
- For Vimeo support, visit https://help.vimeo.com/hc/en-us