

# Illinois Arts Council FY26 Creative Accelerator Fund Tip Sheet

## Getting Ready to Apply

1. **Make sure you are eligible!** This program is for **Illinois-resident individual artists** who are 21 or older and can demonstrate an active and sustained practice since at least 2022.
2. Confirm you can **access the [IAC Salesforce grant portal](#)**. Check to see if you need to update your password. After you log in, make sure you do not have grant reports that need to be submitted. If you don't have an account, click "Not a member" and complete the form with your name, email, and a secure password.
3. Download and review the **[IAC FY26 Creative Accelerator Fund Guidelines](#)** to make sure you understand everything you need for your application.
4. **Use Google Chrome** as your browser when accessing Salesforce. It will not work properly in other browsers.
5. Get your submission ready **before the April 9 deadline**. If you run into last-minute technical issues, staff may not be able to respond before the portal closes.

*NOTE: If you have difficulties accessing your account, email Program Representative, Jasmine Roberson at [Jasmine.Roberson@Illinois.gov](mailto:Jasmine.Roberson@Illinois.gov) for help. If you have issues, you can also submit a Help Desk ticket [here](#).*

## Five Tips for a Successful Application

1. Meet all three **Review Criteria**:
  - Is your application **complete**?
  - Have you demonstrated an **active and sustained art practice**? This means you need to provide Two work samples: one from 2022 or earlier AND one from 2023 to 2025. You also need to describe your art practice and how this grant will benefit you as an artist. More details are on page 4 of the [guidelines](#).
  - Are you **eligible to receive funds from the State of Illinois**? You need to show this four ways:
    - a. Prove you were an Illinois resident prior to April 9, 2024.
    - b. Submit proof of either a valid Illinois State ID or Driver's License.
    - c. Ensure you comply with all IAC granting requirements.
    - d. Not be on the Illinois Stop Payment List - you may be on this list if you are not in compliance with all state agencies. This can look like money to another state agency or not being current with reporting on state grants.

2. Click the **checkboxes for all the assurances**. If any are left unchecked, your application will not be considered complete.
3. Fill out all the **form fields for art practice and work samples**. You will need to provide:
  - a. Number of years as a practicing artist outside of a degree-obtaining program
  - b. Title of Work Sample 1 and year of completion for Work Sample 1 (must be between the years of 2023-2025)
  - c. Title of Work Sample 2 and year of completion for Work Sample 2 (must be 2022 or prior)
4. Provide **all four Supporting Documents**. These include:
  - a. **Application Narrative** - one page document or two-minute video or audio recording. If a video or audio recording, do not worry about production quality! Focus on making sure your submission clearly addresses each of the following:
    - i. Tell IAC about your art practice
    - ii. Describe what art form(s) you practice
    - iii. Describe the community area(s) of Illinois where you practice your art
    - iv. Share how this grant would benefit your art practice
  - b. **Work Sample 1** - the first work sample must be a work you created in 2023, 2024, OR 2025. It can't be work created for a degree-obtaining program. Be sure to list the date the work was completed. Make sure your description in the form and the sample you provide are consistent.
  - c. **Work Sample 2** - the second work sample must be a work you created in 2022 OR EARLIER. Like Work Sample 1, this work sample may not be from work created for a degree-obtaining program. Be sure to list the date the work was completed. Make sure your description in the form and the sample you provide are consistent.
  - d. **Valid Illinois Driver's License or State ID** - you will need to provide a picture of the front of your Illinois Driver's License or Illinois State ID. The expiration date must be on or after April 10, 2025. If it was issued after April 9, 2024, you also must submit a **One-Year Residency Verification** to show you have lived in Illinois for more than one year. This can be:
    - i. Your previous Driver's License or State ID
    - ii. A utility bill in your name from prior to April 9, 2024
    - iii. An Illinois-based W2 or 1099 tax form from 2023
5. Follow the supporting document **naming convention: Applicant Name\_[supporting document type]** for each of the required documents above.

As a reminder, [here's a link](#) to the grant guidelines. Plus, IAC has created a

 [FY26 Creative Accelerator Checklist.pdf](#) to help you make sure your application is complete!