



# 2026 Accelerator Grant Guidelines

The Accelerator Grant is a competitive program offering financial support for local **Emerging and Hobbyist artists** to advance their creative projects and pursue artistic growth. Eligible categories of support for this program are limited to Materials + Supplies, Equipment, Professional Development, and Project Support. **Grant request amounts are not to exceed \$1,000.**

## HOW TO APPLY

Submit your completed applications via the Good Grants platform before the **deadline at noon, 12:00 pm (Eastern) on Tuesday, June 16 (Cycle 1) or Tuesday, August 25 (Cycle 2)**. Visit <https://theartscommission.org/artists/accelerator-grants> for FAQs, a full example copy of the application (with all the questions), important deadlines and updates, and a link to the online application.

## GRANT PROPOSAL

- Short Description of art making (75 words max)
- Budget Template
- Grant Narrative Questions
  1. Explain the expenses listed in the Budget Template (75-200 words or 1-3 minute video)
  2. How will this funding help you grow as an artist and support the continuation of your art making? (100-250 words or 2-4 minute video)
  3. Tell us how you share your work with your community. Please provide details for **where and when** the public will experience your work. (75-200 words or 1-3 minute video)

## DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

- Creative Accomplishments (5 items—Date, Accomplishment, Location)
- Artist statement (50 words minimum, 150 words maximum)
- Bio (50 words minimum, 150 words maximum)
- Work Samples (Visual—up to 6 images; Performing—up to 10 minutes of audio/video; Literary—up to 10-page PDF for all genres; Multidisciplinary—2 images, 2 audio/video, PDF up to 5-page maximum)
- Work Sample Descriptions (Title, medium, date, dimensions, or duration)





## WHO CAN APPLY

Artists are limited to one Accelerator Grants every three calendar years, i.e. artists who receive funding in 2026 will not be eligible to apply again until 2029.

In order to be considered eligible for review by the Grant Panel, the application **must be filled out completely and appropriately.**

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Individual artists and artist collectives with a current residence or a creative studio within **30 miles of downtown Toledo** may be eligible.

The Accelerator Grant is open to artists across all mediums.

Applicants who identify as Hobbyist or Emerging Artists are eligible to apply.

For the purposes of this program, applicants may identify as a **Hobbyist artist if one of the following applies:**

1. Making art is not your profession or career.
2. It's something fun you do in your spare time.
3. You make things purely for self-fulfillment or self-satisfaction or for the love of making things.

For the purposes of this program, applicants may identify as an **Emerging artist if one of the following applies:**

1. You have 0-10 years of experience as a working artist regardless of age or education.
2. You are actively working to grow your creative career with things like exhibitions, performances, honors or awards, publications, artist lectures/presentations, etc.
3. You are someone who's made a career change or recently decided to prioritize your art above everything else.

Applications will be accepted from university or college level **adjunct** teachers.





## INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Artists enrolled in a **degree or certificate-granting program** of any kind at the time of application are NOT eligible for Accelerator Grants. Applications will not be accepted before the graduation date.

Artists **teaching** full-time at a college or university (as a tenure track or full-time salaried employee) at the time of application are NOT eligible for Accelerator Grants.

Artists currently employed by The Arts Commission or serving as members of The Arts Commission's Board of Trustees are NOT eligible for Accelerator Grants.

Applicants self-identifying as Mid-career or Established Artists are NOT eligible to apply for an Accelerator Grant. We encourage those artists to apply for the Merit Award that opens in late August.

Commercial photographers or graphic designers are NOT eligible for Accelerator Grants. For the purposes of this program, a **commercial artist** is someone who creates visual artworks for commercial purposes, primarily to promote and sell products, services, or ideas.

Nonprofits are NOT eligible for this opportunity.

## ELIGIBLE CATEGORIES OF SUPPORT ARE LIMITED TO

Funds may be used by artists during the spending period on expenses related to advancing their artistic practice.

### 1. MATERIALS + SUPPLIES RELATED TO YOUR CREATIVE PRACTICE.

For example: film + photo chemicals, raw materials, paper, canvases, paint, paintbrushes, clay, printmaking supplies, glass blowing supplies, etc.

### 2. EQUIPMENT

For example: presses, camera lenses, instruments, welders, audio equipment, etc.





### 3. PROJECT SUPPORT

For example: paying other artists to help you with your project such as illustrators, musicians, copywriters, copy editors, fabricators, etc. Or irregular overhead costs such as lift rentals or liability insurance.

### 4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For example: fees for professional memberships, workshops, business training, residencies, regional performances, and other costs related to conceptual or technical research.

## INELIGIBLE CATEGORIES OF SUPPORT

Applicants **may not** request funding for the following items.

### 1. REGULAR OVERHEAD EXPENSES

For example: studio rent, utilities, insurance, accountant, bookkeeping, or costs associated with a commercial photography or graphic design business.

### 2. TRAVEL RELATED EXPENSES

For example gas, mileage, plane tickets, parking, gas, mileage, lodging, food, etc.

### 3. NO LAPTOP/TECHNOLOGY EXPENSES

Unless it relates directly to your artmaking practice, you may not request funding for a laptop or other technology.

## REVIEW PROCESS

Applications will be **reviewed by a Grant Panel** composed of The Arts Commission's Board of trustee members and representatives from the performing, literary, and visual arts communities (both from Toledo and the Midwest). The Arts Commission's Chief Executive and Operating Officers serve as ex-officio members on the Grant Panel (the ex-officio members **do not** score or make funding recommendations). Grant Panelists may prioritize awarding to artists representing a diversity of mediums or those who are first-time grantees.

**Please be aware that applying for this grant does not guarantee funding.**





## REVIEW CRITERIA

**Scale of 0-3: 0. Incomplete, 1. Needs Improvement, 2. Acceptable, or 3. Exemplary.**

- Commitment to Art Making
- Artistic Merit
- Impact on Artist's Growth
- Public/Community Presence

## REVIEW TIMELINE

### CYCLE 1

- **Mid-June:** Panelists will Score and Comment on applications.
- **Early July:** Panelists will meet for a Zoom Panel Review where they will make funding recommendations based on application scores.
- **!! Mid-July:** The recommendations from the panel will be reviewed and approved by The Arts Commission. Applicants can expect to **receive an email** from The Arts Commission about the funding decisions.

### CYCLE 2

- **End of August:** Panelists will Score and Comment on applications.
- **Mid-September:** Panelists will meet for a Zoom Panel Review where they will make funding recommendations based on application scores.
- **!! End of September:** The recommendations from the panel will be reviewed and approved by The Arts Commission. Applicants can expect to **receive an email** from The Arts Commission about the funding decisions.

## GRANT DISBURSEMENT

Recipients of Accelerator Grants will receive approved grant funding no later than **one month following the receipt** of their signed grant agreement.

## SPENDING PERIOD

Artists have **90 days from the date of payment** to use the grant funds. The funds are not reimbursable, meaning they cannot be used on expenses incurred prior to receiving the grant.





Original receipts will be required as proof that materials were purchased **after funds were awarded**. Grants received through this program are considered taxable to the extent that is applicable by law. Please consult a tax professional for additional advice.

- **Cycle 1 Spending Period:** August 1—October 31, 2026
- **Cycle 2 Spending Period:** October 1—December 31, 2026

## FINAL REPORTING

- Final reports are **due 30 days after** the funding period unless otherwise requested and approved in writing. The final report due dates for the two cycles are:
  - **November 30, 2026 (Cycle 1)**
  - **January 31, 2027 (Cycle 2)**
- Final report instructions can be found by visiting <https://theartscommission.org/artists/accelerator-grants>.
- Failure to submit a final report may result in **noncompliance status** and could **disqualify the applicant from receiving future grants**. Additionally, the **award may be required to be returned in full** to The Arts Commission.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

If selected by the Grant Panel to receive funding, the grant recipient will be required to sign a release providing The Arts Commission unrestricted permission to use materials provided in the final reporting process, including but not limited to videos, images, and publicity materials, to promote the Accelerator Grant Program.

## QUESTIONS?

For questions, please reach out to **Liz Bayan, Artist Services & Subgranting Manager**.

**Email:** [LBayan@theartscommission.org](mailto:LBayan@theartscommission.org)

**Phone:** 419.254.2787 Ext. 1018

