Illinois ARTS Council

Creative Accelerator Fund

FY27 Webinar

Welcome!

Illinois ARTS Council

Creative Accelerator Fund

FY27 Webinar

- Illinois Arts Council
- Eligibility
- CAF Overview
- Application Process
- Using Salesforce
- Process, Notification & Compliance
- Ways to Connect with IAC Staff

Illinois ARTS Council

1965

The agency is governed by up to twenty-one private citizens chosen for their demonstrated commitment to the arts and appointed by the Governor.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS arts.gov

Illinois ARTS Council

Mission

To build a strong, creative, and connected Illinois through the arts

and we do this by:

- offering support to Illinois' arts sector
- advancing arts education
- fostering creativity and working artists

Creative Accelerator Fund

Crucial support for Illinois' creative workforce

The Creative Accelerator Fund provides a flexible $10,000 taxable award to selected individual artists.

Regional randomized selection in partnership with Illinois State Lottery to determine the order of application review.

Creative Accelerator Fund

General information

Guidelines:
Available on the IAC CAF webpage

Deadline:
Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at 11:59pm submitted via IAC's Salesforce grant portal

Grant Period:
No sooner than January 1, 2027, to August 31, 2027

Award Amount:
$10,000 flat award with no matching requirement.
This award is taxable income.

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Eligibility

Who's Eligible

- Individual artists with an active and sustained practice.
- At the time of application artists must:
  - Be 21+
  - An established Illinois resident prior to October 14, 2025.
  - Include a work sample created by you during 2024-2026.
  - Include a work sample created by you during 2023, or prior.
  - Not be currently enrolled full-time in a degree obtaining program.

Collaborative applications are <u>not</u> eligible.

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Eligibility

Who's Ineligible

- Recipients of the FY25 or FY26 Creative Accelerator Fund Awards
- Individuals enrolled in any degree-obtaining program
- Organizations or schools. This award is for individuals only.

Applicants may only submit one application per fiscal year.

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Definitions

“Individual Artist with an active and sustained practice” is defined as:

- Currently practicing artist
- Have practiced your artform since at least 2023
- Any income generated from art practice is not considered
- Acceptable for art practice to have changed over time

See page 5 for eligible and ineligible art practices

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Unallowable Expenses

Expenditures not allowable with state funds:

- subsidizing an individual's academic study or projects associated with that study

- political activities such as contributions, lobbying, or fundraisers

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How to Apply: Accessing Salesforce Account

- Log-in, or Create a Log-in, in Salesforce

- Salesforce Tips:
  - Use Chrome as your browser
  - If you are having trouble creating a user account, try resetting the password in case you already have an account in the system
  - Contact IAC if stuck in a password reset loop

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How to Apply: Applicant/Application Overview

1. Applicant Information
2. Grant Programs Selection
3. Supporting Documents
    - Application Narrative
    - Work Sample 1: Completed 2024-2026
    - Work Sample 2: Completed 2023, or prior
    - Valid Illinois Driver’s License or State ID
    - One-year Residency Verification
4. Submit / Certification

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How to Apply: Applicant Information

- Individual Name
- General Contact Information, including a drop-down selection of zip-code and county
- Primary Discipline Selection – select one
- Any additional disciplines reflected in artistic practice – select as many as applicable
- Checkboxes if individual identifies as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) or has a disability

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How to Apply: Grant Program Selection

Grant Programs tab

Creative Accelerator Fund – 2027

Applicant selection

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How to Apply: Application Assurances

- Applicant Information tab has been updated
- Active artist
- Sustained artist
- Established Illinois resident
- Can receive taxable income
- 21+
- Currently not enrolled in High Ed
- Acknowledgement of randomized selection
- Permission to use image/work samples
- Consent for potential interview

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How to Apply: Form Fields

- Number of years as a practicing artist
- Title of Work Sample 1
- Year of completion for Work Sample 1 (2024-2026)
- Title of Work Sample 2
- Year of completion for Work Sample 2 (2023 or prior)

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Supporting Documents

May be links or uploads.

Links:

- Must be public and without password protection.
- May not link to sites that require an account (e.g. Instagram)

Uploads:

- 25MB size maximum
  - Audio acceptable formats are: mp3, .wav, .ogg.
  - Video acceptable formats are: .vi, .mov, .mpeg, .mpg, .swf
  - Document Files acceptable format is: .pdf

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How to Apply: Supporting Documents

Prepare supporting documents ahead of time:

- Application Narrative
- Work Sample 1: Completed 2024-2026
- Work Sample 2: Completed 2023, or prior
- Valid Illinois Driver’s License or State ID
- One-year Residency Verification, if needed

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Supporting Document: Narrative

You have the option to provide:

- 1-page pdf ***or***
- 2-minute video or audio recording

Either item should tell us about your art practice:

- What art form(s) do you practice
- Describe the community area(s) of Illinois where you practice your art
- How the award would benefit your art practice

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Supporting Document: Work Sample 1

- Work created by you in 2024, 2025, or 2026
- Not be from work created for a degree-obtaining program
- Description field, applicants may provide optional additional details about the work.

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Supporting Document: Work Sample 2

- Work created by you in 2023 or prior
- Not be from work created for a degree-obtaining program
- Description field, applicants may provide optional additional details about the work.

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Work Sample Definition

IAC defines “Work Sample created by you” as:

- Entirely created by you or
- Created with a substantial contribution by you:
  - Explain in the Work Sample Description what your part in the work’s creation is.

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Work Samples created using A.I.

If artificial intelligence (A.I.) was used as a tool in the creation of your work, that needs to be explained in the Work Sample Description.

Applications should clearly demonstrate meaningful human authorship and creative leadership within any Artificial Intelligence (AI)-assisted work. You may not submit any work entirely generated by an A.I. program as your own to your CAF application.

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Supporting Document: Valid Illinois Driver's License or State ID

- Illinois Driver's License or Illinois State ID:
  - Must expire on, or after, October 14, 2026.
  - If issued prior to October 14, 2025 – that is all that is needed

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Supporting Document: One-year Residency Verification

- If Illinois Identification was issued after October 15, 2025, also include, as a single pdf file:
  - Your previous Driver's License or State ID
  - A utility bill in your name from prior to October 14, 2025
  - A W2 or 1099 from 2024

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How to apply: ~~Financials~~

What about the “Financials” tab in the Application?

- Ignore it
- If you click into this section, you will receive an error message, use the back button to return to the main application

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Submit / Certification

Once the application is complete click the Submit Button in the lower left-hand corner. A pop-up will require certification of eligibility and application content.

Certification details on page 11 in the guidelines.

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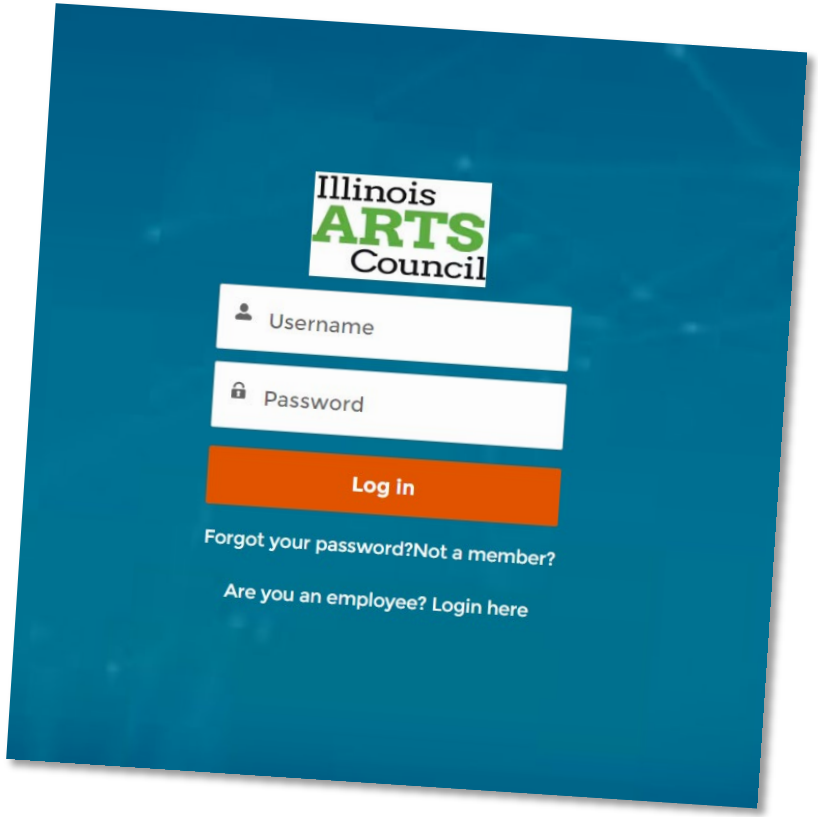
IAC Salesforce Grant Portal

Walkthrough



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Review Process

- Salesforce grant portal will issue an application number
- Ineligible or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
- Reviews are based on the established criteria
- Illinois Lottery assists with randomized selection process
- Final recommendations are presented to the board for their consideration and approval.
- Record of the review process is maintained

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Review Criteria

1. Does the application demonstrate the individual artist has an active and sustained practice?

2. Is the application complete?

3. Is the artist eligible to receive funds from the State of Illinois?

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Notification

- All applicants will be notified via email.

- Some email systems direct our notifications to spam. Please mark the following emails as safe in your email system:
  - No-reply@webmerge.me
  - InsureSign@send.insuresign.com

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Acceptance

Award acceptance is a multi-step process.

Documents required to accept CAF award:

- Artist biography
- Headshot or work photo
- Signed and dated IRS W9 form

Once these items have been uploaded the artist will be sent a link to sign the award acceptance document agreement via Formstack

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Payment

- Once all Acceptance items have been received in the artist's Salesforce account, they will go through a certification process.
- The IAC Fiscal Office will create a payment voucher which will be sent to the Office of the Illinois Comptroller.
- The Illinois Comptroller will process the voucher for payment.
- Payment can take 2 – 6 months to fully process.
- Awarded artists will be issued a 1099-G from the state comptroller for the year in which the grant funds are received.

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Report

CAF Final Report will ask:

- How did the CAF award benefit you as an artist
- Optional quote on the impact of the award and/or photo with photo credit

Due: September 30, 2027

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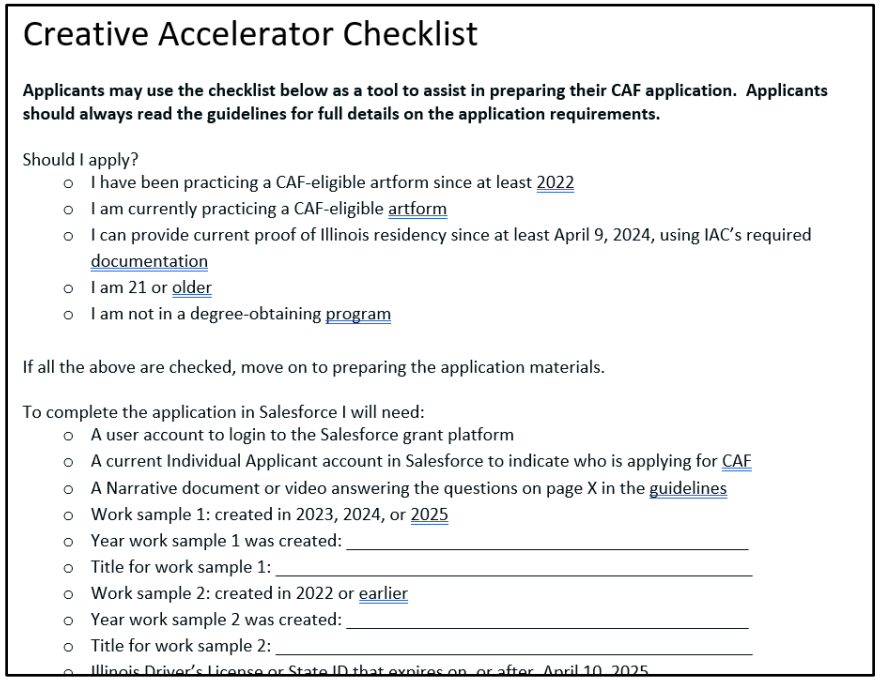
Checklist

Application Checklist on page 15 of the guidelines.



Creative Accelerator Checklist

Applicants may use the checklist below as a tool to assist in preparing their CAF application. Applicants should always read the guidelines for full details on the application requirements.

Should I apply?

- I have been practicing a CAF-eligible artform since at least 2022
- I am currently practicing a CAF-eligible artform
- I can provide current proof of Illinois residency since at least April 9, 2024, using IAC's required documentation
- I am 21 or older
- I am not in a degree-obtaining program

If all the above are checked, move on to preparing the application materials.

To complete the application in Salesforce I will need:

- A user account to login to the Salesforce grant platform
- A current Individual Applicant account in Salesforce to indicate who is applying for CAF
- A Narrative document or video answering the questions on page X in the guidelines
- Work sample 1: created in 2023, 2024, or 2025
- Year work sample 1 was created: _____
- Title for work sample 1: _____
- Work sample 2: created in 2022 or earlier
- Year work sample 2 was created: _____
- Title for work sample 2: _____
- Illinois Driver's License or State ID that expires on, or after, April 10, 2025

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Drop-in sessions

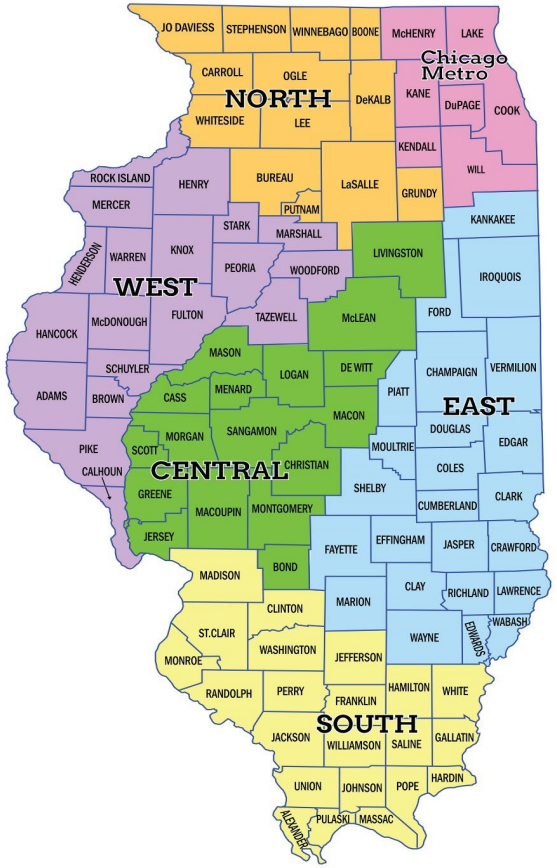
IAC staff will host one hour drop-in session for further discussion and to answer questions during the application process. You do not need register in advance to participate.

Friday, September 11 at noon
Monday, September 21 at 5pm
Thursday, October 1, at 2pm
Tuesday, October 13 at 10am

Links available under the Workshops & Webinars page:
https://arts.illinois.gov/workshops---webinars.html

Illinois Arts Council

Regional Program Directors



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IAC's Program Director finder tool:
https://arts.illinois.gov/about-iac/staff/grant-staff-locator.htm

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Thank you!