

INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS PROJECT GRANT PROGRAM

GENERAL APPLICATION TIPS FOR ALL PROJECT DISCIPLINES

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HOW TO GET STARTED

- Ensure you use the current application form and discipline-specific guidelines available online at the Alberta Foundation for the Arts website. Application forms and guidelines are normally updated 60 days before a program deadline.
- **Read the current discipline-specific project grant guidelines thoroughly.** Even if you have applied before, ensure you re-read the guidelines as there may have been changes. Do not try to make the grant program fit what you want to do. You as the applicant and your proposed project must meet the program eligibility guidelines.
- Have a clear understanding of your planned project activity. Keep in mind that although for you “project” may mean the activity from the initial idea to the finished work, program of study, marketing initiative, or research activity, for this grant program, “project” refers to the specific activities you will complete between the start and end dates you provide on your application form.
- Allow several weeks to prepare your application in order to research costs and logistics, draft a timeline/schedule, book equipment or space rental, gather support materials, and so on. It is important that you demonstrate throughout all the components of your application that your preparation will give you the best opportunity to complete the project activity as described.
- Create a **Table of Contents** in your draft application document to ensure you include all required information.
- Create a preliminary budget for your project activity. (See Budget section below for more information.)

APPLICATION FORM

- The Application Form has several components: General Information, Applicant Information, Application Agreement, and a Project Grant Checklist (which is an attachment specific to each project grant discipline).
- The Applicant Information section includes the following sections about your project activity:
 - The **Brief Project Description** box must contain no more than 10 words and relate to one of the four application categories: Art Production, Marketing, Research, and Training/Career Development. These brief descriptions are used for internal reference. Examples of Brief Project Descriptions include:
 - Art Production: paintings for exhibition, "Pastoral"
 - Art Production: novel manuscript, "Stone Cold"
 - Art Production: narrative short film, "Monday Blues"
 - Art Production: commercial recording, "Great Music"
 - Art Production: composition, "Five Baroque Pieces for Harpsichord"
 - Art Production: production of play, "Wolfgang"
 - Art Production: choreographic new work, "Dance in 5 Movements"
 - Training/Career Development: name of writing program/institution
 - Training/Career Development: name of fine arts program/institution
 - Training/Career Development: Master of Music, vocal conducting, institution
 - Training/Career Development: name of theatre program/school
 - Training/Career Development: name of dance program/school(s)
 - Marketing: Western Canadian tour for the album, "Great Music"
 - Marketing: "Glass Works" exhibition tour in Canada
 - Marketing: music video, "My First Single"
 - Research: archival consultation for the Halifax Explosion
 - Research: electroacoustic music techniques and their impact on ethnomusicology
 - The **Project Start Date** and **Project Completion Date** boxes must be specific dates for the beginning and end of the project activity. Please note: project activity for which you are seeking support cannot begin before the application is submitted to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

- The list of **Ensemble** members is reserved for a group of artists who plan on sharing creative direction and control over a project as a group.
- The Application Agreement must be completed and signed with your original signature. Ensure you fill out all of the required information carefully and thoroughly.
- It is recommended that you do not check the boxes on the Application Checklist until you have included the required material in the package – by doing so, you help ensure you include all components. Only check the boxes that are relevant to your application. Not every box on the checklist pertains to your application.
- Make sure you submit the correct number of copies of your application (as stated in the program guidelines) AND keep a copy for your records.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (3 to 5 pages)

The project description is an important component of an Individual Artists Project Grant application. You may want to structure your project description under these headings that are used in the program guidelines:

Objectives

Planned Activities

Timeline

Expected Results and Benefits

However, keep in mind that this required component amounts to a personal 'essay' in which you should discuss who you are as an artist, what you are aiming to achieve in and through the current project activity, your artistic process in respect to the current project activity, and how the current project activity will provide you with an opportunity for artistic growth.

There are many ways to approach the project description. Your own approach will be informed by the specific objectives of your project and you are as an individual artist. However, strive to be both precise and concise. Project grant juries have many applications to read so it is important to ensure your submission is organized, readable, and detailed. It is recommended that you write in the first-person, personal voice because jurors appreciate hearing your connection to, and passion for, your project.

Below are some points to consider as you write your project description. This is not an exhaustive list, nor does every point apply to your project and background; regardless, these points should help you develop your own specific description concerning your project and your work as an artist.

Objectives:

- Begin with an overview of your project in an opening paragraph that provides a brief summary (5-7 sentences) of who, what, where, why, when and how much – that is, who you are as a artist, what are you proposing to do, why you want to do it, and how much you are seeking in terms of grant support. This summary will help the jury have an immediate snapshot of your application

and help you ensure you have a clear focus for what follows. Keep it brief – you'll develop the points in what follows.

- Discuss in greater detail what you are proposing to do and outline the artistic, marketing, training or research objectives of your project activity. Do not make a mystery of what you are planning to do and how you are planning to do it—be precise, concise, and yet detailed.
- Put yourself in the shoes of the jury. Write your proposal as if the jury knows nothing about you or your project.
- Consult specific discipline stream guidelines for details concerning grant category requirements, but in general:
 - For **art production**: what are you doing stylistically, technically, etc. to realize your “artistic vision” for this project? Will your project lead to technical as well as aesthetic challenges? Does this new project mark an artistic departure from your previous work? Or does this project build on and develop further your artistic activity to date?
 - For **training/career development**: provide details for the program or course of study, mentorship, and workshop. Such details may include: description of course(s), workshop(s), etc., a brief profile of the institution/organization offering the program; whether the program is full or part time; the program’s start and finish dates; names & background of faculty or instructors; history of program; and any other details concerning what the program will demand of you. You should also discuss why you have chosen the program you have and why that particular program will be important to your artistic development.
 - For **marketing**: provide an overview of the work being promoted and your assessment of the audience for that work. Discuss how you will connect with that audience through specific media or promotional strategies. Does your marketing activity involve travel for a tour, performances, readings, special events or other appearances that promote you and/or your work? If so, provide locations, itinerary, promotional plans around those dates/appearances, and indicate if the dates are tentative or confirmed.
 - For **research**: provide an overview of the proposed research activity. Research activity may include experimentation in and exploration of techniques and materials; information-gathering activities (such as archival research; consultation with other sources, places, people) that support or result in the development of new work in your project discipline and thus support your growth as an artist.

- Ensure your project goals are realistic. Discipline-specific assessment juries for each project grant stream wish to support projects that have considerable artistic, educational or promotional merit, as well as projects that will be completed.

Planned Activities:

- Discuss the specific activities, processes, stages that will enable you to achieve your project outcomes.
- Aside from money, what else do you need to complete your project? Outline any steps that you need to take in arranging/coordinating other needs such as: expertise, training, travel, accommodation, equipment, materials, other support, etc.
- In addition to describing activities essential to the completion of your project, provide a rationale for those activities, and outline the sequence of activities required.

Timeline:

- Provide a timeline/schedule breakdown for your project in order to demonstrate how you will complete the project within the project start and end dates provided on your application form.
- Remember that you cannot begin the project activity that you are identifying for grant support before submitting your application.

Expected Results and Benefits:

Part of the mandate of the Individual Artists Project Grant Program is to support the artistic growth and development of individual artists. In this respect:

- Begin with a profile of yourself as an artist; ideally, a paragraph or two highlighting specific and most important details from your Artist Resume and providing some context about who you are. Discuss what you have done to date by providing a brief summary of your work as an artist, whether that's creating new work, performing, touring, training, etc. Please note: if you are an emerging artist, or have not been active as an artist for a period of time, discuss that context directly to help the jury understand your specific circumstances.

- What factors give you a reasonable chance of success? Consider your skills, previous experience, market demand, and so on. If you are working with someone who brings a specific skill set or experience that will aid the completion of the project, then include a brief biography of that principal collaborator, if applicable.
- Discuss how your project activity will challenge your artistic practice, or enable the development of your craft/skills, or raise the profile of you and your work, or generally further your career objectives. Although “artistic growth” is difficult to predict and measure, you should be able to link the specific project activity to your aspirations as an artist.
- Why are you pursuing this project at this point in time? Why is this project important to you? Why is this project worthy of funding?
- Will this project have an impact on your artistic community? (Do not forge such a connection if one does not exist.)

PROJECT BUDGET (consult budget examples)

- A project budget must be detailed and balanced; it must relate to your project description; it must provide the jury with enough detail to assess the viability of the project and thus your ability to complete it. A project budget must also be realistic and sufficient for what you are proposing to do.
- Ensure your budget relates clearly to the project activity. Activities identified in the project description must have a relevant budget line item, when applicable. Similarly, budget line items must relate to the details of your project activity.
- Please note: Total Project Revenues must equal Total Project Expenses and result in a net balance of \$0. If your project budget amounts to more than the \$15,000 maximum allowed in the Individual Artists Project Grant program, you need to indicate in the project budget revenue section how the other costs will be covered, whether that’s through personal contributions, other grants or scholarships, in-kind or deferred costs, etc. Indicate if other sources of project revenue are confirmed or pending.
- Subsistence budget line items provided in the budget examples are those defined as eligible in the program guidelines.
- Other budget line items included in the budget examples are suggestions only. You will need to add or delete budget line items in order to produce a project budget that relates to the specific requirements of your project.



- Provide explanatory notes for your budget, if necessary, that show the jury you have done your research. Be well researched and reasonable. Do not inflate your budget. If applicable, include quotes for items such as travel, equipment, space rentals, materials, personnel, etc.
- Check your specific discipline stream guidelines to ensure the budget does not contain ineligible expenses. If ineligible expenses are listed, include notes on how those items will be covered.
- Consider these additional questions:
 - Did you explain all of the budget line items? Or are there any unexplained contingency or miscellaneous amounts?
 - Are you requesting support for all or a portion of your project?
 - If you do not receive funding or only receive partial funding, how will you complete the project?
- Project grant juries often expect training/career development applicants to contribute towards the project's cost. If you are requesting support for the entire project cost, it is recommended that you provide a strong rationale for your request.
- Check your arithmetic before submitting. Basic errors in calculation do not reflect well on your grant preparation.

ARTIST RESUME

- Include a discipline-specific artist resume. Limit your resume to a **maximum of 4 pages** (as per grant program guidelines).
- Your resume should:
 - present your background briefly and succinctly
 - refer to your major accomplishments and so identify what you do best
 - emphasize what you think is important about you
 - use a format of your making
- The artist resume is a document that represents you as an artist. It does not attempt to tell everything about you; only what is relevant to your career as an artist.
- If applicable, include the resumes of principals and/or ensemble members involved in your project. Remember:
 - An ensemble exerts shared creative direction and control over a project.
 - A principal provides significant support in respect to skills or mentorship, but creative direction and control over a project remains with the applicant.

- The jury uses the applicant's resume to assess the project against the applicant's ability to carry out the proposed project activity. List the most important accomplishments that will help the jury understand your potential for success when carrying out your project.
- Include, in reverse chronological order, with most recent activity first (this is a non-exhaustive list, in no particular order):
 - Educational Background: including workshops and lectures attended, as relevant to the artistic discipline.
 - Work Completed: such as visual art pieces, published work (including bibliographic detail), discography, commissioned work, performances, tours, etc. If the list is extensive, include highlights of past activities.
 - Performance History / Exhibition Participation. If the list is extensive, include highlights of past activities.
 - Awards and other recognition for work in your discipline.
 - Memberships in professional organizations or associations
 - Volunteer work that relates to your artistic discipline.

SUPPORT MATERIALS

- Consult discipline specific guidelines for more information on required support materials, if applicable, as the project grant disciplines have different technical or other requirements for the art production, training/career development, marketing and research categories.
- Provide additional materials that will lend credibility to you and your ability to successfully carry out your project. However, be selective in your choice of such materials—think 'quality' instead of 'quantity'. Additional support materials may include:
 - Reference letters from relevant experts in your field who can vouch for your artistic merit and ability to carry out the proposed project.
 - Confirmation letters from collaborating artists, as applicable
 - Previews / reviews / press clippings
 - Photos and Press Kits, as applicable to your project
 - Other support materials that may assist the assessment process such as catalogues, scripts, storyboard, published books, if applicable to your discipline and proposed project activity.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Always submit a grant application on time and in the requested format. Although grant applications are straightforward to prepare, they are time consuming if done well. Give yourself as much time as possible in advance of the grant deadline. Last minute rushing is more likely to lead to mistakes or missing parts of the application. Keep in mind there are no penalties for submitting an application early.
- Your application as a whole should be creative and compelling, but also concise and clear. Grants are, in part, successful due to the quality of ideas proposed, not the volume of words presented. Does the body of your proposal clearly define your project to someone who does not know you? Why is your project important and worthy? How does the project further your career or facilitate your growth as an artist? Does the application demonstrate that you are good at what you do? Does the application demonstrate that you will be able to complete the project as described and within the timeframe you provide?
- Proofread! Have someone you trust, preferably with good writing skills, read and critique your application. Spelling and grammar errors do not convey a positive or professional image, and applications that do not have a clear and logical structure can often be confusing to read.
- Contact the Arts Development Consultant responsible for the project grant stream to which you are applying. The consultant can assist you in the grant process by: assessing your project's eligibility; responding to your questions concerning all components of an application; and, with enough lead time, reviewing your draft application to help you submit the strongest application possible.