

National Endowment for the Arts

Notice of Funding Opportunity

FY26 Creative Writing Fellowship: Prose

Grant Program Details

UPDATE: This notice of correction is to inform potential applicants of corrections to the previous Notice of Funding Opportunity. The previous notice indicated that amounts for grants would be \$50,000. We are correcting and clarifying that the relevant grant is for amounts "up to \$50,000", subject to the availability of Congressionally appropriated funds and agency funding priorities.

Table of Contents

Click a heading below to jump directly to that section

- Creative Writing Fellowships: Prose 3**
 - Basic Information 3**
 - Executive Summary 3
 - Components of this Notice of Funding Opportunity 4
 - Application Calendar 4
 - Program Description 6**
 - Period of Performance 6
 - Authorizing Statutes 6
 - Eligibility 7**
 - Eligible Applicants 7
 - Award Amounts & Cost Share/Matching 9**
 - Grant Amounts 9
 - Cost Share and Matching Funds 9
 - Application Contents and Format 10**
 - Application Materials 10
 - Applications Recommended for Funding 10
 - Submission Requirements and Deadlines 11**
 - Application Package 11
 - Pre-Application Required Registrations 11
 - Submission Method 12

Application Technical Assistance.....	13
Submission Dates and Times	13
Application Review Information	15
Review Criteria	15
Application Processing	15
Review and Selection Process	16
Risk Review	16
Award Notifications.....	17
Post-Award Requirements and Administration.....	18
Banking Information & Tax Liability	18
Grant Final Reports	18
General Terms & Conditions	18
Legal Requirements.....	18
Assurance of Compliance	19
Standards for Service	20
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).....	20
Privacy Act.....	20
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement	21
Frequently Asked Questions	22
The Application Package	22
Eligibility	24
Other Questions	25
Contacts	27

Access for individuals with disabilities:



Individuals who need assistance accessing this document may contact the Office of Accessibility at accessibility@arts.gov or 202-682-5532, or the Office of Civil Rights at civilrights@arts.gov or 202-682-5454.

Creative Writing Fellowships: Prose

Basic Information

Federal Agency Name	National Endowment for the Arts
Funding Opportunity Title	NEA Literature Fellowships: Creative Writing
Announcement Type	Modification of previous announcement
Funding Opportunity Number	2025NEA03LFCW
Assistance Listing Number	45.024
Agency Contact Information	litfellowships@arts.gov
Key Dates	Application Calendar

Funding Details	Amount (Contingent on availability of funds)
Total Expected Award Funding	\$1,750,000
Anticipated Number of Applications	2,000
Anticipated Number of Awards	35
Expected Dollar Value of Awards	Up to \$50,000

Executive Summary

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Creative Writing Fellowships program offers up to \$50,000 grants in **prose** (fiction and creative nonfiction) and **poetry** to published creative writers that enable recipients to set aside time for writing, research, travel, and general career advancement. Applications are reviewed through an anonymous process in which the primary criteria for review are the artistic excellence and artistic merit of the submitted writing sample. Through this program, the NEA seeks to strengthen the literary arts ecosystem by sustaining and nurturing a wide range of creative writers at various stages of their careers and to continue to expand the portfolio of American art available to people from all backgrounds.

The program operates on a two-year cycle with fellowships in prose and poetry available in alternating years. For FY 2026, which is covered by these guidelines, fellowships in **prose** are available. Fellowships in poetry will be offered in FY 2027 and guidelines will be available in January 2026. **You may apply only once each year.** Please note: competition for fellowships is extremely rigorous. We typically receive approximately 2,000 applications each year and award fellowships to fewer than 2% of applicants.

Components of this Notice of Funding Opportunity

The Creative Writing Fellowship Notice of Funding Opportunity consists of two documents. You will need both to complete and submit your application.

Creative Writing Fellowship Grant Program Details (This Document)

This document contains essential information that will help you plan your application materials, including a grant program description; eligibility; review criteria; award amount; post-award requirements and administration; and frequently asked questions, among others.

Creative Writing Fellowship Application Instructions

Navigate to the *Grant Program Details & Instructions* section on the [Creative Writing Fellowships program page](#) for detailed instructions on how to complete and submit a complete application. Review this information while preparing your application.

Application Calendar

Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov, the federal government’s online application system. The Grants.gov system must receive your validated and accepted application **no later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on March 12, 2025.**

	Important Dates
Guidelines Posted	Mid December
Application Deadline	March 12, 2025 11:59 pm ET
Panel Review	Spring/Summer 2025
National Council on the Arts Meeting	Late October 2025
Notifications	December 2025
Earliest project start date	January 1, 2026

The NEA will not provide applicants with updates on the status of their application before the notification date listed above.

Electronic Submission Waiver

If you are unable to submit your application electronically, you may request a waiver. A waiver will be granted for the following reasons only:

- Internet access is not available within a 30-mile radius of your address.
- Disability prevents you from submitting your application electronically.

Contact the Literary Arts staff at litfellowships@arts.gov for more information on how to submit your waiver request. Waiver requests must be in writing and must be received by the NEA at least three weeks before the application deadline, or no later than 5:30 p.m., Eastern Time, on February 20, 2025.

If you have questions:

Email: litfellowships@arts.gov

Program Description

The National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowships program was established in 1966 by National Council on the Arts members John Steinbeck, Ralph Ellison, and Harper Lee, among others, to support and increase the breadth of America’s literary creativity. The fellowships were designed to give recipients time and space to write and revise, and—should they seek it—time to conduct research and work towards gaining more exposure, publication opportunities, critical reviews, job offers, self-confidence, financial security, and a sense of community. These goals and objectives still hold today.

Since its inception, the fellowships program has supported more than 3,800 writers, often years before their work was acknowledged by other awards and appointments and at critical stages of their careers. Alice Walker, for example, received an NEA fellowship in 1970; in 1983, she became the first Black woman to win the Pulitzer Prize in fiction. Michael Cunningham received an NEA fellowship in 1988 and the Pulitzer Prize in fiction in 1999. Maxine Hong Kingston received an NEA fellowship in 1980 and a National Medal of Arts in 2013. Juan Felipe Herrera and Joy Harjo each received two NEA fellowships (Herrera in 1979 and 1985, Harjo in 1977 and 1992); in the last decade, both have served as U.S. Poets Laureate and chancellors of the Academy of American Poets.

The fellowships program offers up to \$50,000 awards to published writers of prose (fiction and creative nonfiction) and poetry. The program operates on a two-year cycle with fellowships in prose and poetry available in alternate years. For FY 2026, which is covered by these guidelines, fellowships in **prose** are available.

Through these fellowships the NEA seeks to strengthen the literary arts ecosystem by sustaining and nurturing a wide range of creative writers at various stages of their careers. These fellowships enable recipients to set aside time for writing, research, travel, and general career advancement, and help expand the portfolio of American art available to and from people of all backgrounds.

Competition for fellowships is rigorous. The NEA typically receives approximately 2,000 applications each year and award fellowships to 2% of applicants. Applications are reviewed through an anonymous process in which the primary criteria for review are the artistic excellence and artistic merit of the submitted writing sample. Potential applicants should consider carefully whether their work will be competitive at the national level.

Period of Performance

NEA support of a project may begin any time between January 1, 2026, and December 31, 2026, and may extend for up to two years.

Authorizing Statutes

The NEA offers this funding opportunity under the authority of 20 U.S.C. § 954.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

Individual U.S. citizens or permanent residents who meet the publication requirements listed below are eligible to apply. See [Application Contents and Format](#) for the documentation required to demonstrate eligibility. **Ineligible applications will be rejected without panel review.**

An individual may submit only one application for FY 2026 Literature Fellowships funding.

You cannot apply for a Creative Writing Fellowship if you applied at the January 16, 2025, deadline for an FY 2026 Translation Project Fellowship.

You also may not apply:

- If you have already received two or more Fellowships (in poetry, prose, or translation) from the NEA, or
- If you have received any NEA Fellowship (in poetry, prose, or translation) on or after January 1, 2017 (FY 2017).

Previous recipients must have submitted acceptable Final Report packages by the due date(s) for all previously received NEA award(s).

Publication Requirements

You are eligible to apply if you have had published between **January 1, 2015**, and **March 12, 2025**:

- At least five (5) different short stories, works of short fiction, excerpts from novels or memoirs, or creative essays (or any combination thereof) in two or more literary magazines, journals, anthologies, or publications that regularly include fiction and/or creative nonfiction as a portion of their content; *or*
- A novel or novella; *or*
- A volume of short fiction or a collection of short stories; *or*
- A volume of creative nonfiction.

To qualify, work must have been published for the first time with an eligible publisher between these dates, not only reprinted or reissued in another format during this period. Eligible publishers have a competitive selection process and offer some service or services to their writers, such as editing and proofreading; formatting and design; and/or promotion, marketing, and distribution. Student-led publications and publications that primarily print work by persons who are affiliated with a particular academic institution are not eligible.

You may use digital, audio, or online publications to establish eligibility, provided they are published by an eligible publisher as described above. If the online publication or website no longer exists, you must provide, upon request, sufficient evidence that your work once appeared online (e.g., screenshots of the original webpage or correspondence with the

publisher confirming publication). If sufficient evidence cannot be provided, the online publication will not count toward your publication eligibility requirement.

The following content cannot be used to establish eligibility:

- Pre-publication material, such as galleys, proofs, and advance reader's copies
- Work that has appeared in a publication for which you are the editor, publisher, or staff
- Collaborative work
- Scholarly writing
- Instructional writing
- News Reporting
- Book reviews
- Editorials/letters to the editor
- Interviews

Eligibility is determined by the NEA based on your complete and properly submitted documentation. Your application may not be eligible for panel review if incorrect or insufficient information is provided. This includes, but is not limited to: missing or blank attachments; writing samples that are not typescript; and publications in the "Summary of Applicant Publications" (Attachment 2) that cannot be verified. The NEA's decisions on eligibility cannot be appealed and are final.

Award Amounts & Cost Share/Matching

All funded projects must adhere to federal rules and regulations. Before applying, be sure to familiarize yourself with the requirements of managing a federal grant by reviewing the [Post-Award Requirements & Administration](#) section of this document, as well as the General Terms and Conditions and reporting requirements found in [Manage Your Award](#).

Grant Amounts

Fellowship awards are for up to \$50,000.

Cost Share and Matching Funds

There is no cost share/match requirement for NEA Creative Writing Fellowship awards.

Application Contents and Format

Application submission is a multi-step process. The NEA estimates that after registering with Login.gov and Grants.gov, the process to draft and submit an application takes approximately 12 hours.

Application Materials

A complete Creative Writing Fellowship application consists of:

1. An *Application for Federal Domestic Assistance—Individual Form* (SF-424)
2. Attaching the required items to the *Attachments Form*
 - a. Writing sample
 - b. List of publications to establish eligibility

A detailed PDF with step-by-step instructions for assembling and submitting a complete application, including filling out the required *Application for Federal Domestic Assistance—Individual form* (SF-424), and creating the additional required application materials, can be found on the [Creative Writing Fellowships program page](#), under the *Grant Program Details & Instructions* section. These application guidelines provide all the information you need to submit a complete application. Please read these instructions in their entirety before beginning the application process.

There are no pre-application requirements, aside from finalizing [required registrations](#) for Login.gov and Grants.gov.

Applications Recommended for Funding

Applicants recommended for a Creative Writing Fellowship will be asked to submit additional information, which may include: U.S. banking and payment information to receive award funds, a short bio, an artist statement, and an author photo for use on the NEA's website and other agency media.

Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Application Package

A direct link to the Grants.gov Opportunity Package where you will submit the application is included on the [Creative Writing Fellowships program page](#) under the *How to Apply* section.

Pre-Application Required Registrations

Before applying all applicants must register or renew their registration with both Login.gov and Grants.gov. It is your responsibility to create and maintain these registrations. Registering and maintaining these accounts is always free.

Registration is a one-time process, which can take a day or more to complete. To allow time to resolve any issues that may arise, the NEA strongly advises that you not wait until the application deadline day to register. You cannot submit your application if you fail to successfully register with Login.gov and Grants.gov.

Login.gov is a secure sign in service used by the public to sign in to U.S. government sites like Grants.gov and will be used as your single sign in for all NEA activities. You must use a unique-to-you email address when signing up for a Login.gov account (e.g., jane.doe@email.com). This email account should be your personal account and not one that is shared by multiple people or an account affiliated with a particular job (e.g., development@abc.org).

New Applicants:

1. Register with Login.gov
 - Go to [create an account](#) to set up your Login.gov account. This account will allow you to access many government websites, including Grants.gov.
 - If you already have a Login.gov account, you do not need to set up a new account, you may use your existing account.
2. Register with Grants.gov
 - Go to [register](#) and click the red button that says “Get Registered Now” at the bottom of the screen.
 - Next, fill out the contact information, choose a Username and Password, and then click “Continue” at the bottom of the screen.
 - Grants.gov will email you a temporary code to verify your email address. Enter this code as instructed on the Registration page.
 - Under the “How would you like to proceed?” heading, be sure to select the **Add Individual Applicant Profile** option to apply for funding opportunities on your own behalf. [See here for more information on adding a profile.](#)
3. Link your Login.gov and Grants.gov accounts
 - Click the “Login” button in Grants.gov, you will be prompted to link accounts, this is a one-time action.

- After linking accounts, you will always use the Login.gov username and password to sign in to Grants.gov.

Returning Applicants:

1. If you do not already have a Login.gov account, go to [create an account](#). If you already have a Login.gov account, use your existing account; you do not need to create a new one.
2. Link your Login.gov and Grants.gov accounts.
 - Click the “Login” button in Grants.gov, you will be prompted to link accounts, this is a one-time action.
 - After linking accounts, you will always use the Login.gov username and password to sign in to Grants.gov.

Registration Help

The NEA does not have access to your Login.gov or Grants.gov accounts. If you have any questions about or need assistance with these sites, you must contact them directly:

- **Login.gov Help:** Consult the information posted in the [Help Center](#), or use the [online form](#) to submit a question.
- **Grants.gov Contact Center:** Call 1-800-518-4726, email support@grants.gov, or consult the information posted on the Grants.gov website at [Support](#). The Grants.gov Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Maintain documentation such as screenshots or emails (with dates) of your efforts to register before the deadline.

Submission Method

Electronic application through Grants.gov is mandatory.

A detailed PDF with step-by-step instructions for assembling and submitting a complete application, including filling out the required *Application for Federal Domestic Assistance—Individual* form (SF-424), and creating the additional required application materials, can be found on the [Creative Writing Fellowships program page](#) under the *Grant Program Details & Instructions* section.

Electronic Submission Waiver

If you are unable to submit your application electronically, you may request a waiver. A waiver will be granted for the following reasons only:

- Internet access is not available within a 30-mile radius of your address.
- Disability prevents you from submitting your application electronically.

Contact the Literary Arts staff at litfellowships@arts.gov for more information on how to submit your waiver request. Waiver requests must be in writing and must be received by the NEA no later than 5:30 p.m., Eastern Time, on February 20, 2025.

Application Technical Assistance

Login.gov and Grants.gov are government-wide portals; they are separate entities from the National Endowment for the Arts. Though the NEA provides some tips on navigating Login.gov and Grants.gov, technical questions about registration and uploading your application should be directed to Login.gov or Grants.gov.

Contact Login.gov

For help with:

- Registration problems with Login.gov
- Login or username/password issues

Login.gov Help: Consult the information posted in the [Help Center](#), or use the [online form](#) to submit a question.

Contact Grants.gov

For help with:

- Registration problems with Grants.gov
- Your registration status
- Verifying and/or updating your registration information
- Technology-related problems including:
 - Web browser issues
 - Questions about Workspace, webforms, or Adobe Reader
- Problems submitting your application through Grants.gov

The Grants.gov Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at **1-800-518-4726** or support@grants.gov. There are also helpful resources in the [Support Center](#).

Submission Dates and Times

Application Deadline: March 12, 2025, by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

Late applications will not be accepted.

The NEA recommends submitting your application no later than March 7, 2025, to give yourself ample time to resolve any problems you might encounter. The Grants.gov system must receive your validated and accepted application no later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on March 12, 2025. **You take a significant risk by waiting until the day of the deadline to submit your application.**

Exceptions to the Submission Deadline

Late applications will not be accepted.

In the event of an emergency (e.g., a hurricane or a Login.gov, Grants.gov, or NEA systems technological failure), the National Endowment for the Arts Chair may adjust application

deadlines for affected applicants. If a deadline is extended for any reason, an announcement will be posted on the NEA website.

Application Review Information

Review Criteria

In reviewing applications for Creative Writing Fellowships, advisory panelists consider the **artistic excellence** and **artistic merit** of the submitted writing sample. All other application materials are for NEA internal use only and will not be reviewed by advisory panelists. The identity of an applicant is not known to the panelists.

Artistic Excellence and **Artistic Merit** refers to:

- The quality of the 20-25-page sample (e.g., the craft, creativity, and originality of the writing).
- The writing sample's potential to deepen our understanding of others, the self, and/or the world at large.
- The extent to which the writing sample expands the portfolio of American literature (e.g., in style, content, and perspective).

Application Processing

NEA staff processes applications to determine eligibility and completeness. Your application will receive an automatic rejection without panel review if:

- One or more required forms or attachments are missing
- Your writing sample does not meet the minimum page requirement of 20 pages
- Your name or other identifying information (e.g., website, phone number, email address, titles of previous publications) appears in your writing sample.
- Incorrect or insufficient publication information is provided in your Summary of Applicant Publications
- You have already received two or more fellowships from the NEA
- You have received any National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship (in poetry, prose, or translation) on or after January 1, 2017 (FY 2017)
- You have not submitted acceptable Final Reports to the NEA by their due date(s) for previous awards
- You are not a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident of the U.S.
- You have an exclusion record in SAM.gov that excludes you from receiving federal financial assistance. Exclusions are also referred to as suspensions and debarments. Awards cannot be issued to an excluded individual. See <https://sam.gov/content/exclusions> to search the SAM Exclusions database.

Review and Selection Process

Applications are evaluated through an anonymous process according to the review criteria above.

Applications are reviewed, in closed session, by advisory panelists in the literary arts field. Each literary arts panel comprises a diverse group of arts professionals from across the country and at least one knowledgeable layperson.

Panel recommendations are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts, which then makes recommendations to the NEA Chair. The Chair reviews the Council's recommendations and makes the final decision on all grant awards. Applicants are then notified of funding decisions. Due to the volume of applications that we receive, we are unable to provide feedback on the review of fellowship applications.

Risk Review

All recommended applications undergo a review to evaluate the risk posed by the applicant prior to making a federal award. This may include meeting reporting deadlines on prior awards, compliance with terms and conditions, delinquent federal debt, etc.

Award Notifications

Applicants are expected to receive funding decisions for the Creative Writing Fellowships by December 2025.

Applicants recommended for funding will receive a preliminary congratulatory message, followed by an email from the NEA Literary Arts staff with a request for information to continue processing the award and announce the fellowship winners.

Applicants not recommended for funding will receive a decision notification via email.

The official grant award notification (i.e., a notice of action authorized by the NEA Office of Grants Management) is the only legal and valid confirmation of award. Receipt of your official award notification can take several months depending on a number of factors, such as the recipient providing all the necessary award information, the number of awards to be processed, whether the agency has its budget appropriations from Congress, etc.

Post-Award Requirements and Administration

Banking Information & Tax Liability

To receive fellowship award funds, recipients must provide the NEA with banking information for a United States bank; the NEA cannot issue award funds to a foreign bank account.

The Internal Revenue Code provides that the full amount of a fellowship award is taxable to the recipient. If you have any questions about your own income tax liability, you should contact the Internal Revenue Service or your own tax counsel.

Grant Final Reports

Award materials include the reporting requirements for your award and specific instructions for how to submit reports. Required reports include:

- A progress report in conjunction with a payment request, which is submitted the first time the cumulative amount of award funds requested exceeds two-thirds of the award amount.
- A Final Descriptive Report/Financial Report for Literature Fellowships, which must be submitted no later than 120 days after the period of performance end date.

Timely submission of all final reports is an eligibility requirement for future NEA fellowship applications.

General Terms & Conditions

Federal government-wide and agency-specific requirements for NEA grants are included in the [General Terms & Conditions \(GTCs\)](#). Applicants should read this document carefully to understand the responsibilities of accepting an NEA Award. The GTCs also include information on reporting requirements and lobbying prohibitions.

Legal Requirements

NOTE: This list highlights some of the significant legal requirements that may apply to an applicant or grantee; however, it is not exhaustive. More information regarding these and other legal requirements may be found in the [General Terms & Conditions](#) which sets forth the National Policy and Other Legal Requirements, Statutes, and Regulations that Govern Your Award. There may be other applicable legal requirements that are not listed here. It is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that you are compliant with all legal, regulatory, and policy requirements applicable to your award.

- **Compliance with the federal requirements** that are outlined in the Assurance of Compliance below.
- [Debarment and Suspension procedures](#). The applicant must comply with requirements set forth in Subpart C of 2 CFR 180, as adopted by the National Endowment for the Arts

in 2 CFR Part 3254. Failure to comply may result in the debarment or suspension of the recipient, and the National Endowment for the Arts suspending, terminating, and/or recovering the funds. More information on Debarment and Suspension procedures can be found in the GTCs.

- **Federal Debt Status** ([OMB Circular A-129](#)). Processing of applications will be suspended when applicants are delinquent on federal tax or non-tax debts, including judgment liens against property for a debt to the federal government. New awards will not be made if an applicant is still in debt status as of September 1 of the fiscal year listed on this funding opportunity.
- **Labor Standards** ([29 CFR Part 505](#)). Recipients must comply with the standards set out in Labor Standards on Projects or Productions Assisted by Grants from the National Endowments for the Arts.
- **The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988** (41 U.S.C. 8101 et seq. and 2 CFR Part 3256). The grantee is required to publish a statement regarding its drug-free workplace program as well as comply with other requirements.
- Projects or programs that are determined to be obscene are without artistic merit and shall not be funded. 20 USC 952(j)-(l); 20 USC 954(d),(l).

Assurance of Compliance

By signing and submitting its application form on Grants.gov, the Applicant certifies that it is in compliance with the statutes outlined below and all related National Endowment for the Arts regulations and will maintain records and submit the reports that are necessary to determine compliance.

We may conduct a review to ensure compliance with these statutes. If the NEA determines that a grantee has failed to comply with these statutes and regulations, it may suspend or terminate the award, and/or recover funds. This assurance is subject to judicial enforcement.

The Applicant certifies that it does not discriminate:

- On the grounds of race, color, or national origin, in accordance with **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), implemented by the National Endowment for the Arts at 45 CFR 1110.
- Solely on the grounds of disability, in accordance with **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794), implemented by the National Endowment for the Arts at 45 CFR 1151, and the **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** ("ADA"), as amended, (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).
- On the basis of age, in accordance with the **Age Discrimination Act of 1975**, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.), implemented by the National Endowment for the Arts at 45 CFR 1156.
- On the basis of sex, in any education program or activity, in accordance with **Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972**, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.).

The applicant will inform the public that persons who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, or age may file a complaint with the Director of Civil Rights at the National Endowment for the Arts.

The applicant will forward all complaints for investigation and any finding issued by a Federal or state court or by a Federal or state administrative agency to:

Director, Office of Civil Rights
civilrights@arts.gov

The applicant shall maintain records of its compliance and submission for three (3) years. The Applicant will compile, maintain and permit access to records as required by applicable regulations, guidelines or other directives.

The United States has the right to seek judicial or administrative enforcement of this assurance.

For further information and copies of the nondiscrimination regulations identified above, contact the Office of Civil Rights at 202-682-5454 or civilrights@arts.gov. For inquiries about limited English proficiency, go to <http://www.lep.gov>, the [FOIA Reading Room](#), or contact the Office of Civil Rights at civilrights@arts.gov or 202-682-5454.

Standards for Service

The NEA has set the following standards for serving applicants. We pledge to:

- Treat you with courtesy and efficiency.
- Respond to inquiries and correspondence promptly.
- Provide clear and accurate information about our policies and procedures.
- Provide timely information about funding opportunities and make guidelines available promptly.
- Promptly acknowledge the receipt of your application.
- Ensure that all eligible applications are reviewed thoughtfully and fairly.

We welcome your comments on how we are meeting these standards. Email: webmgr@arts.gov, attention: Standards for Service.

For questions about these guidelines or your application, contact the Literary Arts staff at 202-682-5034 or litfellowships@arts.gov.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Disclosure Notice: The NEA may share a copy of awarded grant applications and/or related materials submitted to the NEA by the applicants, with the public or other third parties, where required or permitted by law.

Privacy Act

The following notice is furnished in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a.

This information is solicited under the authority of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, 20 U.S.C. 951 et seq. and is primarily used for the purpose of application review. Failure to provide the requested information could result in rejection of your application. Personal data, such as home address or personal cell phone number may not be released, either in entirety or in part, as exempt from disclosure under FOIA.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at an average of 12 hours per response. This includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. We welcome any suggestions that you might have on improving the guidelines and making them as easy to use as possible. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: webmgr@arts.gov, attention: Reporting Burden. Note: Applicants are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number.

OMB No. 3135-0112 Expires 10/31/2025

Frequently Asked Questions

[The Application Package](#) | [Eligibility](#) | [Other](#)

The Application Package

Where do I find the required forms for my application?

Once you have created a Workspace in Grants.gov, you will see both required forms listed—the SF-242 Application for Federal Domestic Assistance (Individual) form and the Attachments Form. [See instructions on how to create a Workspace.](#)

You can either fill out the required forms online using the Webforms or you can download them to your computer, fill them out, and upload them to your Workspace.

To fill these forms out online, click the button that says “Webform.” Be sure to hit the “save” button at the bottom of each form once it is completed.

If you choose to download the forms, be sure your version of Adobe Reader is compatible with the Grants.gov system. You can find a list of supported versions of [Adobe Reader](#) here, or contact Grants.gov directly to check if your version is compatible. You can also try using the Webforms, which allow you to complete the forms online without downloading and do not require you to have Adobe Reader.

Which internet browser should I use to file my application?

According to Grants.gov, the latest versions of Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari are supported. If you have trouble downloading the application forms, try using a different browser or using the Webforms instead. If you are still having trouble accessing the forms, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

What’s the difference between a form and an attachment?

A form refers to a pre-formatted document with required specific information and/or materials that must be filled out by the applicant. Required forms can be accessed in your Grants.gov Workspace. They include the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance – Individual (SF-424) and the Attachments Form.

An attachment is a document created by the applicant, typically with a word processing software, and converted into PDF format. Required attachments include your writing sample and your Summary of Applicant Publications. These two attachments will be uploaded to your Attachments Form in your Grants.gov Workspace. Although the attachments form has 15 attachment buttons, you will only upload these two attachments to the Attachments Form.

The documents I uploaded into my Attachments Form disappeared. How do I avoid this?

If you are accessing the attachments form as a Webform, be sure to click the “save” button at the bottom of the screen before closing the form. If you are downloading the attachments form, be sure to save it, and all your attachments, directly on your computer. Once you have downloaded the attachments form, you will be able to work on your application offline and will only need to go back online to submit your completed application.

How do I upload my writing sample using the attachments form?

It's similar to attaching a document to an email. On the attachments form, click the "Add Attachment" button and select the correct file from your computer.

The character limit for the project description box on the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance form is too small. Can I add more information elsewhere?

No. The information in this section should be concise. The character limit is 1,000 characters, which allows room for approximately 150-250 words. We understand that this might be a challenge, but note that it is the same requirement for all applicants. This section is for NEA staff use only to ensure you would use your fellowship to support your writing; the review panel will not see this information (the panelists will only see your writing sample).

How do I determine fellowship start and end dates?

The start and end dates refer to the official beginning and ending dates of the fellowship period (known as the period of performance). If selected for a fellowship, the NEA will only award funds to support fellowship activity within these dates, even though some aspects of your overall project may take place before or after the period of performance. If you have questions about your period of performance, please contact the Literary Arts staff.

Can I submit my resume in addition to my other documents?

No. The only part of the application that the advisory panel will see is your writing sample. The panel will not see your publication history or any other documents requested by the NEA.

How do I determine my congressional district? What if I'm an American living abroad?

Visit the [U.S. House of Representatives website](#) and use the "Find Your Representative" tool. Enter the ZIP code that corresponds to your permanent address to locate your congressional district. If the address on your application is outside the United States, enter 00-000 for your congressional district.

My ZIP/postal code is in red after I type it on the application package. Does this mean there's a problem?

Yes. The form requires the full 9-digit ZIP code (00000-0000) that was assigned by the U.S. Postal Service. If you do not know your full ZIP code, you may use the [USPS Look Up a ZIP Code tool](#) to look it up.

What happens if my name appears on or in my writing sample?

Your application will be ineligible and will not be reviewed by the panel. Double check to make sure neither your first nor last name appears anywhere within the writing sample material. The writing sample filename, which includes your last name, does not affect eligibility.

Can I submit a graphic novel excerpt as my writing sample?

Yes, graphic novels are accepted. Keep in mind that an emphasis will be placed on the quality of the writing in the review of your application. Graphic novel samples must meet the same 20-25-page length requirement as all other writing samples.

Will I be able to update my application after the deadline?

No. No changes or additions to the application or writing sample will be accepted once you've submitted your application. If you've made an error on your application and it is **prior to** the deadline, you may choose to submit a new application. In the event you submit more than one application to correct an error, the advisory panel will review only the most recently submitted application.

How do I create a PDF?

The simplest way is to use the "Save As" option in your word processing software and choose "Save as a PDF" (or similar wording.) You may also use a PDF conversion program. To learn more, go to [PDF Conversion Programs](#).

Eligibility

Should I list everything I've published during the eligibility timeframe in my Publications to Establish Eligibility document?

You are only required to list as many publications as you need to meet the publication [eligibility requirements](#). You may list additional publications if you are unsure whether certain publications meet our publication requirements. If you have published books, list those first. This document is used for NEA internal purposes only to establish your eligibility and will not be reviewed by the advisory panel.

I don't have all the information on all of my necessary publications to establish eligibility. Is that a problem?

Not necessarily. List as much of the requested information as possible. NEA staff will check your publications document as part of the eligibility screening process. If the Literary Arts staff can't verify an item on your list, we'll contact you for proof of publication. If you cannot provide that proof, the publication will not count toward your eligibility. If you're unsure whether or not you have enough information for a specific publication, contact the Literary Arts staff.

My book will be released soon after the fellowship application deadline. Can I use it to establish my eligibility?

No. In order to apply, you must meet all eligibility requirements by the deadline date. Reader's advance copies, galleys, uncorrected proofs, and commitments for future publication or production cannot be used to establish eligibility. We use the publisher's official publication date to determine eligibility. Check with your publisher if you have questions about this date.

No exceptions are made to the eligibility requirements. If your book will be published after the deadline, you must use other publications to establish your eligibility.

I'm a poetry writer. Can I apply for a prose fellowship?

If you can establish your eligibility with the required number of published **prose** pieces, yes. Many writers publish in various genres. Though the writing sample you submit for review must be prose, you will not be limited to writing in one genre should you receive a fellowship.

I'm a playwright. Can I apply for a prose fellowship?

If you can establish your eligibility with the required number of published prose pieces, yes. Produced scripts cannot be used to establish publication eligibility, unless they have been published with an eligible publisher. You can submit a script as your writing sample, but keep in mind that it will be reviewed primarily with fiction and creative nonfiction writing samples and reviewed primarily by fiction and creative nonfiction writers.

Can the National Endowment for the Arts help me get my book published?

No. The Fellowships Program is designed to help published creative writers set aside time to write; there is no guarantee that it will lead to publication of a book. In order for your application to be reviewed by our panel, you must meet our eligibility requirements.

I'm a blogger. Am I eligible for a fellowship?

In general, no. Personal blogs on individual websites may not be used to establish eligibility. However, curated blogs may qualify. Contact the Literary Arts staff if you feel a blog post fits into this category.

Do I have to submit my application in English?

An application must be submitted in English, but the writing sample may be in a language other than English, as long as it is accompanied by an English translation, though the translation need not be done by the applicant. If you wish to submit your writing sample in a language other than English, contact the Literary Arts staff at least 10 days prior to the deadline for more guidance.

Other Questions

Can I receive feedback on my writing sample?

Due to the high volume of applications we receive for the Fellowships program, we do not provide individual feedback on writing samples.

Will you accept joint applications?

No. Fellowships are individual awards.

I'm on faculty at a university. May the fellowship go directly to my university so that I may buy time off from teaching?

No. Fellowships are individual awards; all funds are dispersed only to the fellow. However, once a fellow receives funds, it is up to them how they wish to spend it (as long as it relates to their writing). A fellow could pay the university directly, in other words.

Which part of my application carries the most weight with the panel?

The most important component of your application as far as panel review is concerned is your writing sample. It should be representative of your best recent work, published or unpublished. It must be work for which you have sole artistic responsibility. Choose your writing sample carefully.

Can plans for use of the fellowship change, within reason?

Yes. Read the [General Terms and Conditions for Literature Fellowships](#) for more information on requesting changes to an NEA award.

Contacts

We have fielded many questions over the years and we will do our best to troubleshoot problems you encounter.

Carefully read these guidelines and the FAQ before you contact NEA staff with questions.

Determine if your question is best addressed to the NEA, Login.gov, or Grants.gov. Login.gov and Grants.gov are government-wide systems; they are not NEA systems. Though we provide some tips here on navigating Login.gov and Grants.gov, technical questions about registration and uploading your application should be directed to Login.gov or Grants.gov.

Contact Login.gov

For help with:

- Registration problems with Login.gov
- Login or username/password issues

Login.gov Help: Consult the information posted in their [Help Center](#), or use their [online form](#) to submit a question.

Contact Grants.gov

For help with:

- Registration problems with Grants.gov
- Your registration status
- Verifying and/or updating your registration information
- Technology-related problems including:
 - Web browser issues
 - Questions about Workspace, webforms, or Adobe Reader
- Problems submitting your application through Grants.gov

The Grants.gov Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at **1-800-518-4726** or support@grants.gov. There are also helpful resources in the [Support Center](#).

Contact the National Endowment for the Arts

For help with:

- Fellowship eligibility questions
- Specific components of your application
- Questions about the fellowship guidelines

If, after looking over our guidelines and the answers in this section, you'd still like to speak to a staff member, email us at litfellowships@arts.gov.