National Endowment for the Arts
Notice of Funding Opportunity

FY26 Creative Writing Fellowship: Prose
Application Instructions

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Creative Writing Fellowship: Prose

How to Apply

The Creative Writing Fellowship Notice of Funding Opportunity consists of two documents:

Creative Writing Fellowship Application Instructions (This Document)

This document provides detailed instructions on how to complete and submit your application.

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

Creative Writing Fellowship Grant Program Details

Navigate to the *Grant Program Details & Instructions* section on the [Creative Writing Fellowships program page](#) for 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. **We reference the *Grant Program Details* throughout this document and recommend having both available while preparing your application.**

Application Calendar

The deadline time **is Eastern Time**. Be sure to take this into account if you are in another time zone. **Late applications are not accepted.**

	DATE
Grants.gov Submission Deadline	March 12, 2025 11:59 pm ET

If you have questions about your application, contact the Literary Arts staff at litfellowships@arts.gov.

Go to the Grant Opportunity Package on Grants.gov

You will use a Grants.gov Workspace to submit your fellowship application.

1. Access the application package from the [Creative Writing Fellowships program page](#) by clicking on the link for opportunity number **2025NEA03LFCW** under the *How to Apply*

section. This will take you directly to the pre-populated application package in Grants.gov.

2. The Grants.gov "View Grant Opportunity" screen will open, click the red "Apply" button. If the "Apply" button is grey, or you get a "bad request" error, it's likely that you are either not logged into grants.gov, or that your account does not have the right participant role. To create the Workspace application, you must have **added an individual applicant profile to your Grants.gov account.** See more information on adding an individual profile.

3. You will be prompted to enter your Login.gov Username and Password.

4. After logging in, to create a Workspace application:
   a. Fill in the Application Filing Name field with your legal name, then
   b. Click the **Create Workspace** button.

5. Upon a successful Workspace creation, you will be directed to the *Manage Workspace* page, where you can begin working on the application. The required forms will be available in your Workspace and include:
   a. SF-424 Application for Federal Domestic Assistance – Individual Form
   b. Attachments Form

6. You can access each required form online by clicking "Webform" or you can download the forms to your computer by clicking "Download" to work offline.

7. If you choose to download the forms, you will first need to verify your PDF software prior to downloading the forms. You must have a version of Adobe Reader that is supported by Grants.gov installed on your computer. Go to "Adobe Software Tip Sheet" to see the compatible versions of Adobe Reader or to download and install Adobe Reader. See important information about Adobe Software Compatibility with grants.gov.

8. Complete the application using the steps below.

1: Complete the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance— Individual form (SF-424) to Grants.gov

All asterisked (*) items and yellow fields on this form are required and must be completed to submit the form. Do not type in all capital letters. Enter all information directly into the form. Do not copy and paste from previous grant opportunity packages or another documents.

1. Name of Federal Agency: Pre-populated.

2. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: Pre-populated.

3. Date Received: Leave blank; this will be filled automatically with the date that you submit your application.

4. Funding Opportunity Number: Pre-populated.

5. Applicant Information:
   a. Name and Contact Information: All transactions with the NEA must be made using the applicant's legal name. Applicants using pen names or other names must list their legal name here. You must enter your email address as the NEA will provide application status updates via email. Ensure your contact information is valid through December 2026. (Use a personal email you always have access to rather than a work email.) You must notify us of any changes to your name or contact information by emailing litfellowships@arts.gov.

   Due to restrictions from the Department of Homeland Security we are not able to send emails to alias addresses that forward to another email account. Do not enter this type of email address.

   b. Address: Enter information for your permanent address. Information must be valid through December 2026. (If you live outside the U.S., submit your international address.)

   Use *Street 1* for your street address or post office box number, whichever is used for your U.S. Postal Service mailing address. *Street 2* is not a required field and should be used only when a Suite or Room Number or other similar information is part of your address. Do **not** use Street 2 to provide a second address.

   In the *Zip/Postal Code* box, enter 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.

   c. Citizenship Status: Only US Citizens or permanent legal residents are eligible to apply. If you are a permanent resident of the United States, you must provide your Alien Registration Number.

   d. Congressional District of Applicant: Enter the congressional district that corresponds to your permanent address. Use the following format: 2-character State Abbreviation-3-character District Number. For example, if you live in the 5th Congressional District of California, enter "CA-005." If your state has a single at-large representative or your territory has a single delegate, enter your 2-character state/territory abbreviation and "-000." If you need help determining your district, visit the U.S. House of Representatives website and use the "Find Your Representative" tool.

6. Project Information:
   a. Project Title: Your project title should be the title of the writing sample you are submitting with your application. You will also use this title in the header of your writing sample. The title may be the title of your complete piece or the title of the first piece in a writing sample that includes multiple pieces. **Do not include your first or last name in your project title**.

b. Project Description: In two or three sentences, briefly describe how you see your work being advanced by this fellowship. This may include writing, research, travel, etc. List the title(s) of the work(s) you are submitting. (Note: NEA staff will see the project description, but the panelists will not. Advisory panelists only review the submitted writing samples.)

c. Project Start Date/Proposed End Date: Enter your start date as January 1, 2026. Your end date can extend to December 31, 2027. The end date must fall on the last day of the month (e.g., December 31, 2026).

7. Signature Block: By clicking the "I Agree" box, you are certifying that your application is true and correct to the best of your knowledge, you attest that your work sample is your original work, and that you are in compliance with relevant federal requirements that can be found in the Assurance of Compliance on page 20 of the *Creative Writing Fellowship: Prose Grant Program Description* PDF. The "Signature" and "Date Signed" boxes will be populated by Grants.gov upon submission of the application.

2: Complete and Attach Required Items to the Attachments Form

The "Attachments Form" is not a form in the conventional sense. Rather, it is a place to attach documents that you have completed and saved elsewhere on your computer.

Important Tips:
1. The attachment documents **must be submitted as PDF files**.
    - These files/documents can be created using any word processing software. When you have completed the document, save it to your computer and convert it to PDF before attaching it to this form.

    - **Do not create PDFs of your documents by scanning.** Scanned PDFs are much larger, and of lower quality, than PDFs created using word processing software.

    - **Do not embed non-printable media files (video and/or sound) in your PDF documents.** Static images (e.g., pictures) are acceptable. Do not enable any document security settings or password-protect any PDF file you submit to us.

2. No single attachment should be more than 2 MB.

3. Label the first page of each document clearly with the name of the item (e.g., Publications).

4. Leave a margin of one inch at the top, bottom, and sides of all pages. Do not reduce type below 12-point font size. Do not type in all capital letters. Number pages sequentially. Excess pages will not be reviewed.

5. **Name your files as indicated below under "The Attachments" and attach them in the proper order.** Limit file names to 50 or fewer characters and use only the following characters when naming your attachments: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore (_), hyphen (-), space, and period. If you do not follow this rule, your application may be rejected by

Grants.gov. You cannot change the name of a file on the Attachments Form. Therefore, make certain that each file is named correctly **before** you attach it.

6. If you try to view an attachment by clicking the "View Attachment" button on the Attachments Form but are unsuccessful, check the bottom of the screen for the message: "Pop-ups were blocked on this page." If you see this message, press "Ctrl" and "View Attachment" to see the attachment.

The Attachments

When you open the Grants.gov Attachments Form, you will find 15 attachment buttons. You will click a button to select the correct PDF file from your computer that you wish to attach. Be sure to attach the proper file to the proper button as listed below. You will only use the first two (2) attachment buttons; do not use buttons 3-15.

Attachment 1: Writing Sample

To this button, attach one copy of your writing sample. The file name should be your last name followed by "_Sample" (for example: Doe_Sample).

Your writing sample must be a minimum of 20 to a maximum of 25 typescript, double-spaced pages of:
- Fiction (e.g., short story, flash fiction, novel excerpt), and/or
- Creative nonfiction (e.g., creative essay, memoir, literary journalism)

Applicants may submit one or more works as their writing sample, but the total cannot exceed 25 pages. If submitting multiple excerpts or stories, combine them all into a single PDF.

Your writing sample must be:
1. **From work that you have written in the time period that establishes your eligibility (January 1, 2015 – March 12, 2025), and for which you have sole artistic responsibility.** You may submit published work, unpublished work, or work in progress. Do not indicate whether or not the material has been published.

2. **Completely free of your first name, last name, initials, email address, website, or any other marks that could specifically identify you.** The file name "Doe_Sample" is the only place your name can appear. If your first and/or last name appears in your writing sample text or header, your application will be ineligible. The advisory panel will not see the file name. (For example, if your name is John Doe, neither John nor Doe can appear anywhere in your writing sample.)

3. **Labeled to indicate title and genre of the sample.** In the header of every page, include the title, the genre (fiction or nonfiction) and page number in the upper right corner. The title should match the title entered as your Project Title in your *Application for Federal Domestic Assistance* form.

4. **Typed and clearly readable.** Use a 12-point font and margins of at least one inch at the top, bottom, and sides of all pages. Do not submit more than the maximum number of

pages that are allowed; excess pages will be removed and not reviewed. Do not submit handwritten documents.

Have questions? [Click here for an example of how to format your writing sample.](#)

Remember to save your writing sample as a PDF (see "Important Tips" above).

Attachment 2: Publications to Establish Eligibility

To this button, attach the **Publications** document to establish your eligibility. The file name should be your last name followed by "_Publications" (for example: Doe_Publications). **Only NEA staff will see this document.**

At the top of this page, list your legal name, your pen name or other preferred name (if applicable), your email address, and your website (if applicable). **Your name, initials, address, or other identifying information must not appear on any other page of the writing sample material that is submitted.**

List the specific published works that establish your eligibility. You may list additional publications if you're unsure whether a publication meets the publication requirements. (See the Eligibility section on page 8 of the *Creative Writing Fellowship: Prose Grant Program Description* PDF for details). We collect this information only to verify eligibility; it is not provided to the panel reviewers.

For each publication, list the:
- Title, author
- Publisher (including name of magazine or press and web address if available)
- Publication date (month and year, or volume/issue)
- Number of pages of your material (If your work appears in an anthology, this refers to your work within the collection, not the full book.)
- Page number (if a journal or anthology), or if online, an exact URL to your work

Your Publications should be formatted like the examples below:

Book
Title/Author: *A Walk in the City*/ John Doe
Publisher: University Press, www.up.edu
Publication Date: 12/2024
# of pages: 230
URL: n/a

Journal/Magazine
Title/Author: "Hidden Moon"/ Jane Doe
Publisher: Violet Journal, www.violetjournal.org
Publication Date/ Volume-Issue: 10/2023/ Vol. 32 Issue 4 (Fall)
# of pages: 5
Page # or URL: www.violetjournal.org/32-52/doe

Anthology
Title of Your Work/Author/Translator: "Hidden Moon"/Jane Doe
Anthology Title/Editor: *Time Spent (Poems About Grantwriting)*, edited by M. Fed/Jill Deer
Publisher: Small Press, www.smallpress.org
Publication Date: 06/2024
# of pages: 14

Upon request, you must provide proof of publication to establish eligibility to the NEA in one or more of the following ways:

- The title page or cover with your name and the title of the work.
- The copyright page with the publisher's contact information, including web address and phone number; publication date (month and year); ISBN or ISSN number, if a print publication; or URL, if publication is online only.
- The publication's stated selection criteria and editorial policy.

NOTE: When you check the Certification box on the SF 424-Individual form, you are certifying that all parts of your application, *including your publications that establish your eligibility*, are true and correct to the best of your knowledge.

Leave all remaining Attachment buttons blank.

Submit Your Application to Grants.gov

Electronically submit the *Application for Federal Domestic Assistance–Individual* form and required attachments through Grants.gov.

1. Check the size of your electronic application. The total size should not exceed 10 MB.

2. To begin the submission process, log on to Grants.gov and go to the Forms tab on the Manage Workspace page. Click the "Sign and Submit" button under the Forms tab.

   Be certain that you are satisfied with your application before you click the "Sign and Submit" button. No revisions to your application are possible through Grants.gov once it is submitted. After submission, the only way to update items in your application is to create a new application by repeating steps 2-4. The NEA will only review your most recently submitted application.

3. Once you complete and submit your application, you will see a confirmation screen explaining that your submission is being processed. **Take a screenshot of this confirmation screen and save it for your records.** Retain the Grants.gov Tracking Number that you receive in the application submission confirmation screen.

4. Verify that your application was validated by the Grants.gov system. Go to [Track My Application](#) to confirm the validation and track the progress of your application submission through Grants.gov. Do not wait until the day of the deadline to verify your validated submission in case you encounter any difficulties. **We do not accept late applications.**

Note: Acceptance and validation by Grants.gov does not imply that the applicant has uploaded the proper attachments. Before submitting your application, double check that you have attached everything correctly.

For additional help on how to use Grants.gov, see the Grants.gov Support Center. You can also email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call them at 800-518-4726, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week.