



**Hillsborough
County Florida**
Arts Council

FYE 2026 Professional Development for Artists Grant (PDA) Program Guidelines TIMELINE

Grant applications open online: Monday, July 7, 2025 at 9 a.m.

Professional Development for Artists Grant Remote Grant Workshop, will be held on Tuesday, July 8, 2025 at 3 p.m. Registration is required.

Go to: <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/HILLSBOROUGHARTSCOUNCIL/Participant>

Final Deadline: All applications must be submitted in the online grant system by Friday, July 25, 2025, at 5 p.m. Deadlines will not be extended, and partial or incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.

Board Review and Scoring of Applications: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 11 a.m. All applicants will be provided with information to attend virtually.

FUNDING FOCUS

The Arts Council's Professional Development for Artists (PDA) Grant Program was established in recognition of the value of the important contributions of creative individuals to the cultural vitality of Hillsborough County. The program's intent is to support and develop a vibrant, creative community that inspires, energizes, and stimulates prosperity for residents and visitors alike.

PDA Grants provide support to Hillsborough County artists with established success on local, national, or international levels. It is an annual grant program that provides funding to emerging or established artists in a variety of disciplines for a single purpose: **attendance at a professional development experience or the purchase of equipment that is pivotal to the advancement of the artist's career as an artist.** Funding for this grant program is provided by the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners.

ELIGIBILITY

Artists **must** meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Must be an active professional literary, performing, or visual artist
- Must be 21 years of age or older
- Must have been a permanent resident of Hillsborough County since July 1, 2024 and must remain so throughout the funding period
- Must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Must **NOT** have received any type of artist grant from the Arts Council within the last three years (FY2023, FY2024, FY2025)
- Full-time, arts-related faculty in higher education are **NOT** eligible
- Applicants and recipients may **NOT** enroll in, or be currently enrolled in, any undergraduate or graduate degree program during the time their funded project is in progress.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ARTISTS GRANT PROGRAM

Grant funds may only be used for a professional development education experience or equipment that can be shown as advancing the career of the applicant. Only one application per individual will be accepted annually.

Reviewers judge and score the application based on four areas:

- The relevance and impact of proposal on the artist's career
- Demonstrated commitment to career
- Artistic/creative excellence of the work of the artist
- Application clarity and organization

NOTE: Grant funds may only be used to benefit the individual artist applicant and may not be used to support an incorporated business or group endeavor.

GRANT AMOUNT

Artists may ask for a maximum of \$2,000 for their proposal and must provide details of how the grant money will be spent. If the cost of the project exceeds the maximum grant amount, the applicant will be asked to explain how additional costs will be covered.

Matching funds are not required.

REIMBURSEMENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Artists must acknowledge that this is a reimbursement-based grant, and therefore, the artist must pay for the equipment or the educational experience and then submit a reimbursement request.

The requested reimbursement **MUST** be expenses incurred by the individual artist and not a third party or business.

TIMELINE

- Application Opens: Monday, July 7, 2025 at 9 a.m.
- Application Deadline: Friday, July 25, 2025 at 5 p.m.
- Panel Review: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 11 a.m.
- Funding Period: Funded projects must take place between January 1, 2026 and August 15, 2026. Costs incurred or obligated prior to or after this period will not be reimbursed. All expenses claimed for reimbursement must be accompanied by receipts dated within funding period and submitted via the online grant system no later than August 15, 2026.
- The final report is due September 30, 2026

*An incomplete application will be deemed ineligible.

ARTIST STATEMENT

An Artist Statement of no more than 300 words is required as part of the application process.

An Artist Statement, when well crafted, is a critical component to successfully securing grant funds. Please review this link which provides excellent guidance on drafting a succinct Artist Statement.

https://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/art-bytes/dont-say-deleuze-how-to-write-a-good-artist-statement-54662

WORK SAMPLE INFORMATION

Examples of current, original work by the artist are required as part of the application process. Work samples should demonstrate the current level of ability of the applicant and convey artistic/creative excellence. Work samples submitted for review must be completed and not a work in progress. Additionally, the applicant must be the primary artist behind the work, unless part of a partnership or collaboration and it is noted as such in the Work Sample Information detail.

The following details must be provided in the Work Sample Identification Information section:

1. File Name or URL
2. Title of the work and year of completion
3. Dimensions or duration of finished work

4. Media used (if visual art)
5. Date and place of first exhibition, performance or publication
6. Names of other performers seen/heard on the work or contributors to the work
7. Other additional descriptive information about the work after the file identification (awards, methodology, etc.).

Additionally:

- Work must have been created within two years of the application, and it is recommended that at least one sample has been created within the last year. Do not submit multiple files/images of the same work.
- Keep in mind that reviewers will be accessing work samples provided with the application from their personal computers running a myriad of different operating systems and software. Therefore, we must limit the number of samples and the file formats being accepted.
- To ensure a fair process, do not submit more samples than is requested as extra samples or pages will be deleted.
- If fewer than the requested number of samples are submitted, the application will be ineligible.
- Applications without work samples or work samples not in the specified format will be disqualified.

NUMBER AND TYPES OF WORK SAMPLES

2D, 3D Visual Artists

- Eight large, high quality, digital images of different work in JPG or PDF format.
- Upload each individual image separately through the online system.
- Do not paste all work samples in one file.
- Make sure the image is sufficiently large enough to see detail and techniques used in the work.
- List the required information for each work in the Work Sample Information section.

Music, Dance, Theatre, and Film/Media Artists

- Applicants submit three relevant samples showing 2-4 minutes of the artists' work per sample.
- No video files (mp4, avi, mov) will be accepted due to bandwidth limitations and reviewers may not have the ability to listen to samples in these formats.
- Instead, provide a direct link (URL) to an online hosting site such as YouTube or Vimeo for your video files.
- Videos must be detailed in the Work Sample Information section.
- For applications involving theatre, eight images of a past production may be submitted in cases where copyright has prohibited videotaping.

- Images must be detailed in the Work Sample Information section.
- For applications involving music, applicants should upload three pieces of four minutes or less in mp3 or wav format. Samples must be detailed in the Work Sample Information section.

Please note: Reviewers have many work samples to review. For this reason, they will listen/view 3-4 minutes of an audio/video sample.

- If you must upload a sample longer than the length specified, you need to indicate on your Work Sample Information list which 3-4 minutes you want the reviewer to see.
- If no indication is given, the reviewer will listen/view the first three minutes.

Literary Artists

- Up to ten pages of poetry, prose, screenplay, script or manuscript as a pdf.
- For work longer than 10 pages such as novels, plays, etc., choose a section that is the strongest example of your work.
- If more than 10 pages are submitted, only the first 10 pages will be shared with the reviewers.
- If fewer than 5 pages are submitted, the application will be ineligible.
- List the required information for each work in the Work Sample Information section.

GRANT REQUESTS FOR EQUIPMENT

If purchasing equipment is part of your request, you must provide a direct link (URL) to a website page that includes a detailed description of the equipment, the supplier and cost. This must be a product description of the same equipment listed in the Budget section of your application.

You are limited to the equipment that you request in the grant application. You may NOT substitute the piece of equipment you requested for a different one without prior approval from the Arts Council, which is not guaranteed.

GRANT REQUESTS FOR EDUCATION EXPERIENCES

You must provide a direct link (URL) to a website with details of the conference/workshop/residency identified in the Budget section of your application. Self-paced classes with no live instruction or guidance are not permitted under this program.

If you need to include travel costs in your application, you must list those costs in the Budget and include estimates from travel providers.

You are limited to the conference/workshop/residency and travel plans that you outline in your grant application. You may not make substitutions without prior approval of the Arts Council, which is not guaranteed.

PROPOSAL BUDGET

You must submit a simple budget/list of expenses associated with your request that gives the total cost even if it is more than your grant request. Any expenses incurred over the amount of the grant award will not be reimbursed.

SCORING

Applications must earn a minimum average score of 70 to be recommended for funding.

The maximum number of points an application can earn is 100 points. Grant reviewers will individually score each application. The average of the individual panelist scores will determine the final score.

Applications are reviewed and judged by criteria divided into four categories: 1) Need and Impact; 2) Commitment to Career; 3) Artistic Excellence; and 4) Clarity and Organization.

NEED AND IMPACT (25 points)

The application clearly connects the potential impact of the proposal to the artist's personal craft or body of work. The benefit of the proposal to the artist's career goals is clear and realistic. (Assessed through narrative and program/product information.)

COMMITMENT TO CAREER (25 points)

There is evidence of consistent pursuit of and strengthening of a career as a working artist that is appropriate to the artist's years of experience. (Assessed from artist goals and artistic resume.)

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE (25 points)

The artist's vision and understanding of craft is evident. Artist Statement provides insights into the artist's work. Work samples demonstrate creativity, originality, consistency in quality, overall artistic/creative excellence and skill. (Assessed through Artist Statement and work samples.)

CLARITY AND ORGANIZATION (25 points)

The application is clear, concise and complete. The proposal has been well researched and there is evidence of quality or high standards. Financial information is clear, and the budget is well-thought out.

Grants are awarded beginning with the highest scoring grant until funding runs out.

SCORING DESCRIPTIONS

The following scoring descriptions will be used:

Exceptional: The applicant has provided overwhelming and clear evidence throughout the application that demonstrates that all of the funding criteria are met. The plans are clear, well-articulated and appropriate. The budget is realistic, comprehensive and carefully aligned with the narrative. The support materials are of the highest quality, highly relevant, and lead to a deeper understanding of the artist and his or her work.

Good: The applicant has provided sufficiently clear evidence throughout the application that demonstrates that the most crucial criteria are met. The plans are clear and appropriate but are not always well-expressed. The budget is realistic and reasonably aligned with the narrative. The support materials are of good quality and relevance.

Fair/Weak: The applicant has provided limited or very limited evidence in the application that demonstrates the criteria are barely met or not met at all. The plans lack detail and may be hard to understand. The budget has limited detail or is unrealistic and not well aligned with the narrative. The support materials are limited or of poor quality.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Use the following categories for your proposal budget. Grant funds may only be used for **one** of the following allowable expenses. Be specific and comprehensive. Please remember that you need to pay for the items yourself and then request reimbursement. A third party may not pay for the expenses under any circumstances.

1. **EQUIPMENT:** Equipment purchase directly related to the creation of the artist's work. Specifications regarding product description, supplier and cost must be included with the application; or

2. **EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE:** Attendance at an educational experience such as a workshop, seminar, or residency that is directly related to advancing the skills of the applicant in his/her discipline. Reimbursement requests for an educational experience may include the following:

- a. Education Fees: Provide a brochure and/or invitation to participate that outlines program, presenting organization, location, and costs.
- b. Travel Expenses: Cost of travel to and from an approved education experience may be included in the grant request. Provide a quote or estimate from a commercial airline or commercial rental car agency showing location and estimated dates of travel. The travel is limited to flights from Tampa and surrounding airports and directly to the airport closest to the educational site.
- c. Lodging Expenses: Lodging expenses are limited to a single room rate to accommodate the grantee only during the dates of the educational experience

only. Provide a detailed quote or estimate from the hotel for the dates that lodging will be needed. If not included as part of the package, the amount of reimbursement may not exceed the cost of lodging available through the workshop, residency, or other educational offering approved in the grant award.

EXCLUDED EXPENSES

- Food, Beverages
- Gratuities
- Stipends to other creatives
- Consumable art supplies/tools such as brushes, paint, clay, canvas, etc.
- Entertainment
- Non-commercial transportation (including Uber, Lyft)
- Fuel, Tolls, Parking, Mileage reimbursement or Vehicle maintenance
- Insurance
- Lodging from non-commercial establishments

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: HOW MUCH CAN I REQUEST?

A: The maximum request is \$2,000. If granted, the award will be for the full amount requested; no partial grants are awarded in this program. Remember, this is a reimbursement-based grant. You must pay for the education or the educational experience (and travel, if applicable) yourself, and then request reimbursement of the expenses.

Q: WHEN DO I HAVE TO TURN IN MY APPLICATION?

A: Applications and work samples must be uploaded to the online system by **5 p.m. on Friday, July 25, 2025**. Upon submitting your online application, you will immediately receive an e-mail confirmation. If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, your application has not been successfully submitted. Applications submitted after 5 p.m. will NOT be accepted under any circumstances. Incomplete application will be deemed ineligible.

Q: AM I REQUIRED TO MATCH THE GRANT?

A: Although matching funds are not required, if the cost of the request exceeds the maximum grant amount, the applicant must explain how the additional cost will be paid and identify the source of the funds.

Q: AM I AN EMERGING OR ESTABLISHED ARTIST?

A: This is up to the applicant to determine. Applicants may be either emerging or established artists, but in either case must have a record of artistic achievement appropriate to the stage of their career. In general, an emerging artist is an individual

who is in the early stages of building their career but has a clear, definite direction. An established artist has a successful career record with an extensive body of work and good history of professional accomplishment.

Q: CAN I APPLY IN MORE THAN ONE DISCIPLINE?

A: No. Please determine your strongest discipline or area of focus as an artist and submit your application accordingly.

Q. WHY DO I NEED A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST RESUME/CV?

A: A professional artist resume/CV is not the same as an employment resume. This resume will determine the majority of your score regarding commitment to your career and your artistic/creative excellence. The resume will provide important information about your commitment to be a professional artist, performer or writer -- giving reviewers an overall understanding of your accomplishments and the context of your work. You should be sure to include: all relevant education (formal and non-degree seeking), solo/group exhibitions, grants, awards, honors, and accomplishments through performances, or published work and any other relevant information about your career. It should always include specifics such as names, places, dates, and locations.

Do not submit a narrative biography in paragraph format in place of your resume/CV.

If you do not already have a professional artist resume/CV, please start as soon as possible. Creating a good resume takes time but once you have created one, it will be easier to update and will be very useful to you in the future. For information on preparing a professional artist resume/ CV, please visit <https://www.agora-gallery.com/advice/blog/2018/07/16/the-artist-cv/>.

Q. HOW DO I PROVE I HAVE BEEN A RESIDENT FOR ONE YEAR?

A: Valid proof must include a date prior to July 1, 2024, your legal name and Hillsborough County address. Submit one of the following: Florida driver's license, property tax receipt, income tax return (first page only), lease agreement, Florida vehicle registration. Upload a copy of the proof as a PDF.

Q: WHAT OTHER MATERIALS WILL I NEED TO SUBMIT?

A: In addition to the work samples listed above, you will be asked to upload a work sample list, resume/CV, descriptions of education experiences and price quote(s), specifications/supplier description of the equipment and a price quote. No additional support materials will be accepted. Applications without these materials will be ineligible.

Q: CAN I ASK ARTS COUNCIL STAFF TO REVIEW MY APPLICATION BEFORE I SUBMIT?

A: In the interest of fairness to other applicants, the Arts Council will not review or proof your application prior to submission. Successful applicants have found that it is most

helpful to have a friend, colleague, or mentor review their application for clarity, spelling, or grammar before it is submitted.

Q: AM I ABLE TO SAVE MY APPLICATION AND RETURN TO IT LATER?

A: You will not need to complete your application all at once. The online application is divided into sections and stages and can be completed over time. You can save your work as you go and return to your application at any point before submitting. To review and edit your application, sign in to your profile at:

<https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/HILLSBOROUGHARTSCOUNCIL/Participant>.

Q: CAN I PRINT MY APPLICATION FROM THE ONLINE SYSTEM?

A: You can log into your account and review or print your application at any time.

Q: IF I FIND A MISTAKE AFTER SUBMITTING MY APPLICATION, CAN I CORRECT IT AND RESUBMIT?

A: Once you finalize your application by completing the "Certification" task and clicking "Mark as Complete" you can no longer make additions, corrections, or any other edits. The Arts Council urges applicants to start applications early, review answers carefully and, if possible, have a friend or colleague to review your application before you complete the submittal process.

Q: WHAT CAN GRANT DOLLARS BE USED FOR?

A: Grant dollars must be used to support a single purpose. This means a single item – a fee for a workshop or conference, taking a master class, purchase or rental of a piece of equipment. In some instances, there may be shared or related expenses that are also legitimate. For instance, attendance at a conference AND travel costs to attend; or, a major piece of equipment AND a necessary additional component (a saw AND a blade). If you are unsure if you can use grant funds for a specific expense, please contact the Arts Council. Applicants are required to provide details for the request and the request amount. For example, a conference brochure with location, pricing, and dates; a draft invoice; or an online price quote, etc.

*You are limited to the piece of equipment or educational experience that you outline in your application. You are NOT allowed to make substitutions without pre-approval from the Arts Council, which is not guaranteed.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING THAT I AM UNABLE TO USE GRANT DOLLARS FOR?

A: The PDA Grant Program will not support:

- Projects that take place outside the funding period of January 1 – August 15, 2026.
- Tuition to assist artists in obtaining an undergraduate or graduate degree.
- Proposals that benefit an incorporated business or group.

- Proposals that do not primarily further the applicant's development as an individual practicing artist (e.g. Projects that aid in employment outside the individual artist's practice by a business such as a full-time teacher, curator, a full-time, academic teaching, curatorial work, etc.)
- Multiple professional development experiences
- Requests to purchase/rent multiple pieces of equipment
- Food/ per diem expenses and some types of travel expenses

Q: IF I RECEIVE A GRANT, WHAT WILL I BE REQUIRED TO DO?

- To accept the grant, you must complete and return a signed Grant Agreement within 10 business days of receipt.
- Give recognition/credit to the Arts Council of Hillsborough County and the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners in all communications related to your career or work during the grant year including websites, social media, media interviews, and digital or printed marketing materials.
- Complete the Final Report form by September 30, 2026. Final paperwork includes the report, at least two forms of proposal documentation (handouts from education experience, photos, work products, receipts, etc.), and other paperwork as required.
- All grant recipients must complete an IRS W-9 Form and will receive an IRS 1099 Form at the end of the calendar year. Grantees are responsible for any tax obligations under federal, state or local laws. No reimbursements will be issued without a completed IRS W-9 form.
- Grantees will provide a high-resolution photo of their likeness (with or without their artwork) and a maximum 500-word bio. These may be used by the Arts Council in publicizing and promoting the grant program.
- Grant recipients may be asked to participate in marketing activities and/or creative presentations during the funding period's calendar year.

Q: I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS. WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

A: Contact the Arts Council with any questions at Arts@HillsboroughCounty.org.